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SERMONS

Preach'd upon

Several Occasions:

By the Right Reverend Father in God,

Dr. JOHN WILKINS,

Late Lord Bishop of

CHESTER.

The Second Edition.

LONDON:

Printed for *Ri. Chiswell, Will. Battersby,* and *Will. Rogers.* 1701.

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THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

I *Eaſily foreſee that in this cenſorious and inquiſitive Age* two *Queſtions will be asked concerning the publiſhing of theſe Sermons*, Why no ſooner? *or*, Why at all? *ſince ſo many come abroad every day that the Age is almoſt oppreſs'd with them. To the* firſt *I anſwer, Becauſe I was not at leiſure before to review them, and to get them tranſcribed out of a hand not legible enough for the Preſs: To the* other,

Becauſe though there be many Sermons yet not many ſuch; whether we conſider in them, the uſefulneſs and weight of the matters treated of; or the ſuitable manner of handling them, in a ſtile of ſo much clearneſs and cloſeneſs and ſtrength, as was fitted (as he himſelf was wont to wiſh) to the capacity of the weakeſt, and the conviction of the ſtrongeſt; *or the ſolid or well-poized judgment of the Author in points of difficulty; or laſtly, the admirable candour and moderation of his temper in matters of difference and diſpute.*

And I purpoſely mention his Moderation, *and likewiſe adventure to commend him for it; notwithſtanding that this* Virtue, *ſo much eſteemed and magnified by wiſe men in all Ages, hath of late been declaimed againſt with ſo much zeal and fierceneſs, and yet with that good grace and confidence, as if it were not only no* Virtue, *but even the ſum and abridgment of all* Vices. *I ſay, notwithſtanding all this, I am ſtill of the old Opinion, That* moderation *is a* Virtue, *and one of the peculiar ornaments and advantages of the excellent conſtitution of our Church, and muſt at laſt be the temper of her Members, eſpecially the* Clergy, *if ever*

we

we ſeriouſly intend the firm eſtabliſhment of this Church, and do not induſtriouſly deſign by cheriſhing heats and diviſions among our ſelves, to let in Popery at theſe breaches.

As to the Author *himſelf, I cannot forbear out of a generous indignation to ſee the aſhes of ſo worthy a Man trampled upon, to take notice of a very ſlight, and, I think, unjuſt Character given of him in a late Book entituled,* Hiſtoria & Antiquitates Univerſitatis Oxonienſis; *whether by the Author of that Book, or by ſome other Hand, is variouſly reported, and I am not curious to know. The former part of the Character is cheifly made up of invidious reflections upon his carriage, and the circumſtances of his condition in the late Times; in all which, becauſe I did not then know him, I leave him to be vindicated or cenſur'd by thoſe who were witneſſes of his whole behaviour and temper in that time. The latter part of it conſiſts of flat and ill-favour'd commendations; as,* That he was Philoſophiæ & Mathematicæ addictiſſimus, a great well-willer to Philoſophy and the Mathematicks; *the exact Character of an* Emperick *and an* Almanack-maker, *when theſe two*

excellencies happen to be in conjunction: And then, that to the ſtudy of Divinity he added eloquentiam inconcionando non contemnendam, an eloquence in preaching not to be deſpiſed; *which though it be but a very cold and ſlender commendation both of his Divinity and his Eloquence, yet I muſt own ſomething of kindneſs in it, becauſe there is in good earneſt a ſort of Eloquence in Preaching that is to be deſpiſed. To finiſh the kindneſs, and that nothing might be omitted that might any ways caſt an* odium *upon him, as he is placed next before Mr.* Hobbs, *ſo I cannot but obſerve in comparing their Characters, that there is apparently far leſs of envy and detraction in that of Mr.* Hobbs's, *than in this of the Reverend* Biſhop; *for which I can imagine no other reaſon but this, that Mr.* Hobbs *was then alive to ſpeak for himſelf, but* the dead bite not.

Upon the whole, it hath often been no ſmall matter of wonder to me, whence it ſhould come to paſs that ſo great a Man, and ſo great a lover of Mankind, who had the inclination, the skill, and the opportunity to oblige ſo very many, and was ſo highly valued and reverenced

by

by all that knew him, ſhould yet have the hard fate to fall under the heavy diſpleaſure and cenſure of thoſe who knew him not: And that he who never did any thing to make himſelf one perſonal enemy, ſhould have the ill fortune to have ſo many. I think I may truly ſay, that there are, or have been, very few in this Age and Nation, ſo well known, and ſo greatly eſteemed and favoured, firſt by a judicious Prince, and then by ſo many Perſons of high rank and quality, and of ſingular worth and eminency in all the learned profeſſions, as our Author *was.*

And this ſurely cannot be denied him, it is ſo well known to many worthy Perſons yet living, and hath been ſo often acknowledged even by his enemies, that in the late times of confuſion, almoſt all that was preſerved and kept up of Ingenuity and Learning, of good Order and Government in the University *of* Oxford, *was chiefly owing to his prudent conduct and encouragement. Which conſideration alone, had there been no other, might have prevailed with ſome there to have treated his memory with at leaſt common kindneſs and reſpect. Not to do this to the dead, and in Character*

of him that was intended to live to posterity, seems very hard; and yet I shall only make this soft reflection upon it, That there is no readier way for any man to bring his own worth into question, than by endeavouring to detract from the universally acknowledged worth of other men.

Having said this out of justice as well as friendship to the Author, *and by way of necessary vindication of him from the envy endeavoured to be raised against him by some in this present Age, I leave these* Discourses *of his to justify themselves and him to Posterity.*

John Tillotson.

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The

The First Sermon.

Hebrews XI. 26.

For he had respect unto the recompence of reward.

AMongst the many doubts and scruples which are apt to disquiet the hearts of good Men, there are none more frequent than those occasioned by their own mistake, concerning the scope and ends they aim at. For when upon an impartial enquiry into their own condition, they find, that which has the chief influence upon them in any temptation or difficult service is not so much the deformity of sin, or the beauty of holiness, as the fear of Hell and the hopes of Salvation; this is apt to deject them with sad doubts and fears concerning their own sincerity, as if they

were yet only in a mercenary ſlaviſh ſtate of *Unregeneracy*, and had not in any meaſure attained to thoſe filial affections which belong to the ſtate of *Adoption*. And by this means it comes to paſs, that they do often needleſly diſquiet themſelves, and diſcourage others.

My deſign therefore from the *Text*, is ſo to clear up and ſtate the Truth in this caſe, as may prevent thoſe miſtakes, and the ill conſequences of them.

The chief ſcope of this *Chapter* is to ſet forth the nature and the power of *Faith*. The nature of it is deſcribed *ver.* 1. to be *the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen.* The Power of it is afterwards exemplified, by diverſe inſtances out of the Old Teſtament, concerning many ſtrange Difficulties and Trials, which thoſe holy men of Antient times were enabled to undergo, being ſtrengthened chiefly by this Grace of *Faith*. In the relation of which, there is an obſervable mixture of Examples, ſome of leſſer note, with others of remarkable eminency, leaſt weak Chriſtians might be diſcouraged at thoſe great Examples of *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Moſes*;

Moſes; as being unable ever to imitate ſuch patterns.

Amongſt the reſt of theſe Examples, this of *Moſes* is one of the moſt remarkable, and it may juſtly be ſet upon Record as a ſtrange thing, that one in the heat of Youth, as he was, who had always been brought up amid'ſt the delights and favour of the Court, and ſo by his Age and manner of Education inclined to Pleaſures and Ambition; that ſuch an one ſhould notwithſtanding, prefer the troubles of a Wilderneſs before the Pleaſures of a Court, exchange all his honours for the preſent, and his hopes for the future, for certain reproach and troubles; *refuſing to be called the Son of* Pharoah's *Daughter, and chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the People of God.* And becauſe it might be wondered at, upon what reaſon and motive he did this; the *Text* gives us an account of it, *he had reſpect unto the recompence of reward.*

The words will not need much explication. They give us an account what it was that did chiefly encourage *Moſes* to ſo ſtrange a choice; and that was, his belief that he ſhould be a gainer by it, his expectation of a reward for

it. Ἀπέβλεπε γὰρ εἰς τὴν μισθαποδοσίαν, *For he hath respect to the recompence of reward.* There are but two principal *terms* in the *Text*, the one denoting the *Act*, and the other the *Object*.

1. The *Act*, ἀπέβλεπε, which we Translate, *he had respect to.* The *word* signifies properly the fixing of his Eye with intention, as men usually do at the mark which they aim at.

2. The *Object*, μισθαποδοσία, *the recompence of Reward.* The word *Reward* doth not necessarily imply Merit, as is evident from *Rom.* 4. 4. where 'tis supposed that it may be *of Grace*; especially when it refers to the happiness of our future state in Heaven; which can never be strictly deserved by any work that we can do. But it signifies commonly the bestowing of any good thing before Promised, whether out of free Grace and Bounty, or by way of Hire or Wages.

The *Proposition* I shall insist upon from these words is this:

Prop. *That it is not only permissively lawful, or an indulgence allowed unto the infirmity of weak believers, but 'tis likewise necessary for the most eminent Saints, to strengthen and support themselves in their difficulties*

by

by a special and particular regard to the recompence of reward.

A *Point*, which in many respects will deserve your attention, not being so commonly treated of, and the generality of Men being very apt to mistake about it; and yet a mistake in this may prove of very dangerous consequence, especially to one that lies under any fear or dejection of mind, by putting him into an incapacity of receiving any comfortable evidence concerning his own sincerity.

I am not ignorant that this inference may seem unto many a bold Paradox and Mistake, as being directly against what hath so commonly been asserted and taught by many others. And therefore I shall endeavour to be the more wary and considerate in the explication and proof of it.

For *Explication* of it: 'Tis requisite that the chief terms be cleared and distinguished.

1. *Reward* is of two kinds: 1. *Temporal*, consisting in a freedom from outward evils, and the enjoyment of all those blessings which concern our well being in this Life: Or 2. *Eternal*, which includes our deliverance from Hell, our

enjoyment of God, and all those inconceivable joys, which we hope for in the Life to come.

2. A Man may propose a thing to himself as his *End*, or Aim, two manner of ways, *Subordinately*, or *Principally*: 1. That is a *Subordinate* end, which we desire, not for it self, but as a means for the helping of us to something beyond it. 2. That is a *Principal* or *ultimate* end, unto which all our other prosecutions and endeavours are but subservient means.

Now to apply these distinctions to our present purpose:

1. Temporal rewards may be the subordinate end in our Obedience; and therefore are they so often proposed to us in Scripture; and for this reason, *Goodness hath the Promises of this Life.*

2. Temporal reward may at first be the chief occasion of mens being converted, and following Christ. The first reason which made the Woman of *Samaria* give ear to him, was her hopes to be eased of the trouble of coming so often to draw water at the Well. And there is no reason to doubt, but that amongst these Multitudes which at first followed our Saviour out of by-

Joh. 4. 15.

ends,

ends, ſome out of curioſity to ſee his Miracles, others out of want and hunger to feed upon his Loaves, others for their health that he might cure them, there were many that proved true Converts.

3. We muſt not propoſe Temporal rewards as our chief end; for then we ſhall venture upon any means whereby they may be procured, and conſequently ſhall be put upon many unlawful courſes, which may ſeem more likely to advantage our aims in this kind.

4. The chief and ultimate end of all our Actions ſhould be the glory of God. Since all things are *of Him*, and *through Him*, 'tis but reaſon they ſhould be *to Him* likewiſe. As the *Apoſtle* joyns them, *Rom.* 11. 36. And thus far I ſuppoſe men do generally agree about th ispoint. But they do not commonly apprehend or conſider, that we do then make the glory of God our principal end, when we place our chiefeſt happineſs in the enjoyment of him. So that we are not to look upon his glory as any thing abſtracted from, or contrary to our own good, but that wherein it conſiſts; God himſelf (in the phraſe of the *Schools*) being our *objective*

happineſs: *I am thy exceeding great reward*, Gen. 15. 1. And our own Salvation, or our enjoyment of him, being our *formal* happineſs; So that *that* Man who doth principally aim at his own Salvation, or the enjoyment of God, may properly be ſaid to make the glory of God his chief and ultimate end; It being a vain imagination for us to ſuppoſe any other or better way for the promoting of his glory, than by our own happineſs, which he principally deſigns.

As for thoſe Caſes which ſome Men put, wherein theſe two are ſeparated and oppoſed, as if a man ſhould be content to be damn'd for the promoting of God's glory, *&c.* It were eaſy to prove that they are inconſiderate, preſumptuous ſuppoſitions, not without ſuch wild inconſiſtencies as are not to be ſuppoſed, neceſſarily implying one of theſe two abſurdities: Either that the chief end of every Man ought not to be his own happineſs, or that his happineſs doth not chiefly conſiſt in the enjoyment of God; both which are fundamental Principles. For the Glory of God is a Relative term, and ſignifies nothing elſe but that excellency of his which reſults from all his other Attributes, his Mercy, Juſtice,

Juſtice, Power, *&c.* Now which of his Attributes is like to be advanced by ſuppoſing a Creature that loves him in the higheſt degree ſhould be made eternally miſerable? So then the ſubſtance of this laſt concluſion thus explained, is this: That as Temporal rewards may be a ſubordinate end, ſo our Eternal reward muſt be the principal end of all our Actions.

And ſo much briefly for the ſtating or explication of the *Point*. As for the proof of it from *Scripture*, it ſeems very clear from the *Text*, wherein we have an account of that which enabled *Moſes* for this difficult ſervice, his looking to the reward; now if there had been any other aim, which had a greater influence and efficacy upon this Action of his, it would not ſeem agreeable to the Rules of reaſon, that a leſs encouragement ſhould be ſet down, as the cauſe of it, when there was ſomewhat elſe upon which that effect had a nearer dependance.

We have another like inſtance to the ſame purpoſe, in this very *Chapter* concerning *Abraham*. It was queſtionleſs a hard duty for him to leave his Country and his Fathers houſe, to be a Sojourner in a ſtrange Land; but that which encouraged

couraged him to obey God in this command, was a *double* reward which he expected: 1. *Temporal*, that he ſhould *receive* that place *for his inheritance*, v. 8. 2. *Eternal*, *a City that hath Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God*, v. 10.

So in the *Chapter* immediately before this, *ver.* 34. the *Apoſtle* ſpeaking of ſome who are enabled *to take joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods*, he renders this as their chief reaſon that encouraged them to it, becauſe *they knew in themſelves that they had in Heaven a far better and a more enduring Subſtance.* That which made St. *Paul* himſelf to
2 Cor. 4. 17. eſteem thoſe *temporal afflictions to be but light and momentany*, was the conſideration of that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* in the Heavens. Upon this ground it is, that our Chriſtian Progreſs is ſo often in Scripture compared unto a *Race*, where men put forth themſelves to the utmoſt, and all for the hopes of obtaining a *Crown.* And
1 Cor. 9. 25. in reference to this doth the *Apoſtle* profeſs of himſelf, that he did *follow after, and reach forth, and preſs forward to the mark*, that is, he did ſtrain himſelf with his utmoſt diligence and induſtry, and all *for a price* (ſo it follows)

for

for the price of the high calling of God in Chirſt, Philip. 3. 12, 13, 14.

It were eaſy to cite abundance of other Scriptures to this purpoſe, but I haſten to the Reaſons of the point.

Mat. 5. 12. *Rom.* 2. 17. 1 *Coloſ.* 1. 4, 5. *Rev.* 2. 10. 22. 14. 1 *Tim.* 6. 19.

1. From that Prime and Fundamental Law of Nature, whereby every created thing is by its moſt powerful and immediate inſtincts carried out to its own conſervation. Nothing is more eſſential, not only to *rational*, but even to *ſenſitive* Nature, than that it ſhould principally ſeek its own continuance and well being, and all other things only in order to this: So that it may juſtly be queſtioned, whether it be in it ſelf poſſible, or conſiſtent with this Principle of Nature, for a Man to love any thing more than himſelf, or not for himſelf, upon ſome account or other? It is granted on all hands, that our *chief end*, our *ſummum bonum*, is our own *happineſs*: All the difference is, wherein this happineſs doth conſiſt: ſome placing it in the *preſent enjoyments* of this Life, others in the future good things of another World; one Man is for the Court of *Egypt*, and *to be called the Son of* Pharoah's *Daughter*; another will rather *chuſe Affliction* and reproach for the pre-

preſent, in expectation of ſome better reward afterwards. And though both do vaſtly differ about the ſeveral ways and means which they propoſe to themſelves, yet they do and muſt agree in the ſame general ſcope and end of *happineſs*. So that according to this *Principle*, to aim chiefly at our own well-being, is not only permiſſively lawful (as I ſaid before) a thing which we may do; nor is it neceſſary only by way of precept, being that which a Man ought to do as his Duty; but 'tis likewiſe eſſentially neceſſary to our very nature; ſo that every Man muſt do it, nor can he do otherwiſe.

For the clearer explication of this, I ſhall crave leave to remember you of that diſtinction which I have elſewhere had occaſion to inſiſt upon, betwixt *Natural Principles*, and *Moral Duties*.

1. *By natural Principles*, I mean ſuch kind of impreſſions, as are originally ſtamped upon the nature of things, whereby they are fitted for thoſe ſervices to which they are deſigned in their Creation: The Acts of which are neceſſary, and under no kind of liberty of being ſuſpended. Herein did the Wiſdom of the Creation conſiſt, that God

God was pleaſed to endue the kinds of things, with ſuch natures, and principles, as might accommodate them for thoſe works to which they were appointed. And he Governs all things by ſuch Laws, as are ſuited to thoſe ſeveral natures, which he had at firſt implanted in them. The moſt univerſal principle belonging to all kinds of things, is ſelf-preſervation, which in Man (being a rational Agent) is ſomewhat further advanced to ſtrong propenſions and deſires of the Soul, after a ſtate of happineſs, which hath the predominancy over all other inclinations, as being the ſupreme and ultimate end, to which all particular deſigns and actions muſt be ſubſervient.

2. By *Moral Duties* I mean, ſuch Habits or Actions as are the moſt proper means for the attaining of this end. About theſe we have a liberty of Acting; to which we are to be induced in a moral way, by ſuch kind of Arguments and Motives, as are in themſelves ſufficient to convince the reaſon.

So that ſelf-love, and the propoſing of happineſs as our chief end, though it be the Foundation of Duty, that *baſis* or *ſubſtratum* upon which the Law is founded,

ded, yet it is not properly a moral duty; becauſe every Man muſt do it neceſſarily, nor can he do otherwiſe.

Now to ſuppoſe that the Holy and Wiſe God ſhould impoſe any thing as a duty upon his Creatures, which is inconſiſtent with thoſe principles that he himſelf hath implanted in their natures, in their firſt Creation, is an apprehenſion as abſurd in it ſelf as it is unworthy of God.

This natural Principle of endeavouring after happineſs, is the Foundation of all *Moral Duties:* For the higheſt moral inducement or motive to perſwade men to any thing, is to repreſent ſuch a thing as neceſſary to their happineſs; ſo that our Obligation to Duty, is from the Law of God, but the great motive to it is Love to our ſelves, and a natural deſire of happineſs.

2. From the chief ſcope of all thoſe promiſes and threats ſo frequent in Scripture, which are certainly intended for this very purpoſe to excite and quicken us in our Obedience. Now it cannot be denyed, but that 'tis our duty to make that the aim and end of our actions, which the Scripture it ſelf propoſes to be ſo; *namely*, to avoid the evil

evil and obtain the good therein mentioned: *Deut.* 30. 19, 20. After that large Catalogue of Mercies and Judgments before recited, *Moſes* puts them in mind, that he had *ſet before them that day, life and death, bleſſing and curſing, therefore chuſe life, that thou and thy ſeed mayeſt live*, &c. upon this account it is that ſeveral Precepts in Scripture are preſs'd upon us with ſo many affectionate inſinuations taken from the conſideration of our own good: *Deut.* 5. 29. *Oh that there were ſuch an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my Commandments always, that it might be well with them, and their Children after them.* And *Chap.* 6. v. 24. *The Lord Commanded us to do all theſe things for our good always, that he might preſerve us alive*, &c. Now I ſay, it is not only lawful, but 'tis our duty to ſerve God upon his own Motives and Encouragements, and to make that a principal reaſon and end of our obedience, which he himſelf propoſes to us under thoſe Conſiderations.

3. From the nature of that Principle, which hath the chief influence upon the very life and actions of every Religious Man, and that is *Faith. The juſt*

just shall live by Faith. As *Reason* is the Foundation of all humane actions, so is *Faith* of Religious duties. And every one under the notion of Just or *Religious*, is acted by this principle of *Faith*, as *brutes* are by *Sence*, and *Men* by *Reason.* Now *Faith*, v. 1. *is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* Where among the things hoped for, and not seen, are clearly meant, the happiness and salvation which we expect hereafter, the rewards of a better life, which Faith doth as really discern in the promises, as if they were actually present to the Sense. Hence it is, that *Salvation* is said to be *the end of our Faith, receiving the end of your Faith even the Salvation of your Souls*, 1 Pet. 1. 9. So then if all Religious actions be derived from *Faith*, as the main root and principle of them, and if Faith doth chiefly refer to the rewards hoped for, and not seen, then it must needs follow, that it is as necessary for a believer to have a principal aim at the rewards, as it is for him to live by Faith: And that he may as well pretend to be above the life of Faith, as to be above the help of those encouragements of the rewards and

and promiſes propoſed in Scripture; and ſo far as Faith hath an influence upon our Religious actions, ſo far muſt we reſpect the recompence of reward.

4. From the nature of our *Love*, which is another Principle, whereby the Soul is acted and carried on, in all its attempts and proſecutions. Now the proper object of Love, is not ſo much that which is *abſolutely* good in in ſelf, as that which is *relatively* ſo to us. And this being rightly underſtood will give very much light unto the chief difficulties about the Point in hand: 'Tis true indeed, there are in the *Deity*, Attributes of ſuch a ſuperlative goodneſs, that of themſelves they do deſerve infinitely more than the beſt of our affections; but yet they prove affectual to the winning over of our love and deſires ſo far only, as they are apprehended to be convenient for us. And therefore the exacteſt *Schoolman*, who ſpends moſt of his time and endeavours in the contemplation of thoſe tranſcendent excellencies which are to be found in the Deity, after all his Studies may find his heart as cold and ſtupid, as

the most ignorant man. These things may raise his *wonder*, but not his *affections*, or in the phrase of a good *Divine*, *they may dazle his understanding into a more distempered ignorance, but will never be able to ravish his Soul with those angelical flames of love, which sanctified men do feel on Earth, and the glorified Saints do fully enjoy in Heaven.* Hence it is, that though the Devil doth understand those absolute perfections in the divine nature better than any man in the World, as that God is most wise, most holy, most glorious; yet he doth not love him, because he himself cannot receive any benefit by him. And upon the same ground is it, that though a man should be sufficiently perswaded, that his neighbour hath more grace than himself, and so is absolutely more lovely; yet he is not bound to love his neighbour better than himself; because it is not absolute, but relative good, that is the surest ground of love. And therefore the beloved Disciple who had most skill in the nature of this grace, tells us, that *we loved God because he loved us first*, 1 Joh. 4. 19. Implying some kind of necessity of apprehending God under

under the notion of a Friend or a Saivour, before we ſhall love him. *He that comes to God muſt* look upon him as μισθαποδότης, a Rewarder, v. 6. Now, I ſay, if God's love to us, muſt be the chief reaſon of our love to him, then it is neceſſary for us in our beſt ſervices to have a principal reſpect unto the reward, and thoſe things which to us may be moſt advantageous. To which I ſhall add, That the phraſe of *loving God with all our hearts, with all our ſouls, and with all our might* (ſo frequent in Scripture) doth ſignifie no more, than loving him as our chief end. We are allowed to love other things in ſuch a meaſure and proportion as they are conducible to our real happineſs, and as they are ſubordinate ends: But our chief and ultimate end is ſaid to have all, becauſe it comprehends under it all the intermediate.

5. Unto theſe I might add a *fifth* Reaſon, from thoſe eminent examples in Scripture to this purpoſe. That of *Adam*, who whilſt he was in the perfect ſtate of innocence, and conſequently could not have any ſuch reluctancy or weakneſs in his nature, which might

make a good duty seem difficult; yet God saw it necessary for him, that his obedience should be fenced about with promises and threatnings. *Do this and*
Gen. 2. 17. *live. The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt dye the death.* And therefore certainly it is not possible for us, who have corrupted natures, to attain unto any perfection above this. Nay, of *Christ* himself, it is recorded in the next *Chapter* to this, *vers* 2. *That he endured the Cross, and despised the shame for the joy that was set before him.* And so too in the fifth *Chap. vers.* 7, 8. He was *afraid, and learned obedience by the things which he suffered.* Now you know that our Saviour was perfect Man: perfect in regard of all those things which are essentially and necessarily annexed to our natures, and perfect too in respect of that utmost holiness of which in this life we are capable; and therefore if he according to his humanity were thus quickned in his obedience, by hopes of reward, and fears of suffering, certainly then 'tis impossible for us whilst we are in this World to be ever above such helps.

I shall

I ſhall need to ſay no more for confirmation of the Point. There are many Objections againſt it, as being beſide the common road and opinion; ſome of the chief of theſe, I ſhall endeavour briefly to examine and anſwer, and then proceed to Application.

The firſt *Objection* may be from that common notion of Mercenary love and ſervile fear, which are uſually thus deſcribed, when we do good out of love to the reward that belongs to it, and avoid evil out of fear of thoſe judgments that may follow upon it. And theſe are frequently condemned as ſinful affections, belonging to the Devil and wicked men, and no way agreeing to one that has the nature of a Child. To which purpoſe are thoſe common ſayings. *Oderunt peccare mali formidine pœnæ:* And that of St. *Auguſtin*, *Qui Gehennas metuit, non peccare metuit ſed ardere; ille autem peccare metuit, qui peccatum ipſum ſicut gehennas odit. He that is reſtrained from ſinning by the fear of Hell, is not ſo much afraid to ſin as to be damned; he only doth truly fear ſin, who hates it as he does Hell*; with divers the like ſpeeches. 1. *Object.* *Ep.* 4. 4.

Sol. For *answer* to this: 1. As to the authority of such usual opinions or sayings, 'tis considerable that the Assertion here maintained, being acknowledged to be a *Paradox*, it cannot therefore in reason be expected, that bare humane Testimony should be looked upon as of any special force against it. And to speak as the truth is, 'tis too common a fault amongst good *Divines* to take up general notions upon trust, without applying them to the Rule by a particular examination.

2. As to the reason of this Objection, I humbly conceive with submission, that the proper nature of servile fear, is to drive us from God in rebellion and disloyalty, rather than to him in obedience and submission. And therefore the Metaphor is taken from a Slave, in whom the fear of his Master makes him run away from him, and desire that he may not return to him again, as it was with the *Amalekite's* servant, 1 *Sam.* 30. 15. When men are afraid of God, and fly from him as an enemy, whose ruine they wish, according to that common saying: *Quem quisque metuit, periisse expetit:*

expetit: So that a man cannot do good out of a ſervile fear, this doth not put him upon the performance of his duty, but of his luſts; ſuch was that fear in *Adam*, which made him fly from, and endeavour to hide himſelf and his faults from God; ſuch was that in *Saul* and *Judas*, which made one of them run upon his ſword, and the other to ſtrangle himſelf. The diſpoſition of a child is fear mixed with love: The fear of the rod may bring a child to his father in filial obedience, tho it drive the ſervant from his Maſter in a ſlaviſh diſloyalty. And ſo likewiſe for Mercenary love; which is when reward can hire us to any thing without any conſideration of the good or evil of it, as in thoſe two examples of *Saul* and *Judas*, one of whom would diſobey God to win the ſpoils of his enemies, and the other betray his Maſter for *thirty pieces of ſilver*. Such was that alſo in *Balaam*, of whom the *Apoſtle* ſaith, that *he loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs*, becauſe of his ſtrong inclinations to curſe *Iſrael*, that he might obtain *Balaac*'s reward.

1 *Sam.* 13. 4.

2 *Pet.* 2. 15.

'Tis true indeed, if there be in a man's heart any secret desire of liberty to sin, and a grief because there is punishment annexed to it, such a disposition of the soul is unquestionably evil; and of such alone it may be truly said, that he does not fear to sin, but to be punished, as St. *Austin* speaks. And yet it does not follow but that sin ought to be avoided for the punishment denounced against it. And he who out of consideration of punishment is afraid to offend God (supposing that he doth not in his heart actually desire any thing against the Law and Justice of God) such an one doth as he ought; for punishments are truly to be feared, and they are therefore proposed in Scripture to deter us from sinning.

2. Obj. 2. Another *Objection* is this: If in our obedience we may chiefly aim at our own private benefit, then it seems that we may love our selves better than God; nay then we set up our selves in his room. For that which we propose as our chief end, that we make our God: And this (says one) is the highest impiety imaginable; why, a man had better pull the Sun out of

of Heaven than pull God thence, which he doth whilſt he makes a Deity of himſelf. 'Tis not better than the *Indians* Idolatry, who adore the Devil; nor leſs abſurd than the *Ægyptians* Devotion, who worſhip the Onyons and Leeks. God is to be loved for himſelf; and to love him for any thing elſe, were to place ſomewhat above him.

For anſwer to this, you may pleaſe to remember what was ſaid before, That we do then make God our chief end, and give him that ſupreme honour which he expects, when we place all our happineſs in the enjoyment of him. He doth not propoſe himſelf to us in Scripture as abſtracted from our good, but as comprehending it. So he tells *Abraham, I am thy exceeding great reward:* So that the loving of God for himſelf and his own excellency, ſo much talked of in *Myſtical* Divinity, is but another name, 'tis not another thing, from Heaven and Salvation: For the enjoyment of God is Heaven. And as a man's love is to any thing, ſo muſt his deſire be of enjoying it. Nor can it otherwiſe be, but that if God be our *objective* happineſs, our enjoyment of him

Sol.

Gen. 15. 1.

him must be our *formal* happiness. The force of this Argument supposes those things to be separated and opposed, which do necessarily involve one the other.

3. *Object.* 3. A third *Objection* may be from those two great examples of *Moses*, the instance of the *Text*; and St. *Paul*, as some think, the Pen-man of it.

1. As for *Moses*, we read of him, that he was so desirous of his brethren's pardon, that rather than his request for them should be denied, he would have his own *name blotted out of the Book of Life*, Exod. 32. 32.

2. And St. *Paul* speaking of the rejection of the *Jews*, professes that he wished *himself to be an Anathema from Christ, for his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh*, Rom. 9. 3. From whence it may seem that these holy men had so fully cast off all respects of their own, that they could wish themselves damned for the Salvation of their brethren. So far were they from aiming principally at the recompence of reward.

Sol. To that of *Moses*, I answer: 'Tis evident from the Context, that 'tis to be understood of temporal death, not eternal.

eternal. In the 10th. *Verſe* of that *Chapter*, God had told *Moſes*, that if *he would let him alone*, to deſtroy that People for their Idolatry, *he would make of him a great Nation*, *ver.* 32. *Moſes* rather deſires that God would ſpare the People, and deſtroy him; rather than not forgive their ſin, *blot me, I pray thee, out of the Book which thou haſt written.* The phraſe of a written Book, being a metaphorical expreſſion, and ſignifying no more than the purpoſe of God, which he hath decreed within himſelf in reference to future events; ſo that to be cut off by an untimely death, is to be blotted out of this Book. Now to die for a man's Country is no more than what every wiſe and valiant man is ingaged to by the Rules of Morality. There being a happineſs beyond and above a temporal life, which may be purchaſed by ſuch ſufferings.

As to St. *Paul*'s wiſh of being an *Anathema from Chriſt*, ſuch a deſire if underſtood in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of it, cannot be lawful upon any condition; the reaſon is, becauſe a man cannot properly be an *Anathema from Chriſt*, unleſs he be in a ſtate of ſin, and conſequenly

ſequenly an enemy to God, as well as in a ſtate of miſery. And there is no imaginable condition that can make it lawful for a man to wiſh himſelf in a ſtate of ſin: Beſides, that it implies a groſs contradiction, as if a man out of the zeal of his love to God, ſhould wiſh himſelf to be an enemy to him, and to be eternally ſeparated from him.

Or if any ſhall ſuppoſe the meaning of his wiſh to be, That he might be only ſeparated from the enjoyment of Chriſt, without being an enemy to him: Beſides that this is inconſiſtent with the Divine goodneſs, that thoſe who love him in the higheſt degree, ſhould be debarred from the enjoyment of him: It hath in it likewiſe a plain contradiction to the nature of love and zeal.

The proper notion of loving any thing with all our might, is ſo to eſteem and deſire it as to place our chief happineſsin the enjoyment of it. And zeal is nothing elſe but a warm anger againſt any thing which may hinder us in this fruition. So that for a man out of the Zeal of his love to God, to be content not to enjoy him, muſt

muſt needs be a plain contradiction.

And as for ſuch a degree of love to our brethren as the ſtricteſt ſenſe of theſe words doth imply, it is neither lawful, nor poſſible: 1. Not lawful, becauſe God hath propoſed the love of our ſelves as the pattern of our love to others; and it is not fit that in drawing the portraicture, we ſhould ſpoil the pattern. That order in Charity to which we are obliged doth not permit this. 2. Not poſſible, becauſe ſuch a love would be in ſome ſenſe greater than that which Chriſt ſhewed unto the World, and *greater than that hath no man*, Joh. 15. 13. So that this phraſe is not to be underſtood in the ſtricteſt literal ſenſe; or if it ſhould, 'tis by no means lawful, and therefore not to be drawn into example.

What the moſt proper and genuine ſenſe of that Scripture may be, is not ſo eaſy to determine. St. *Hierom* underſtands it *de occiſione corporali*; ſo making it equivalent with that other ſaying of the ſame *Apoſtle*, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 8. *We were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Goſpel of God only, but alſo our Souls* (or lives) *becauſe ye were dear unto us.* So Chriſt is ſaid

to

to be made a curse for us, by reason of that ignominious death, &c.

Photius. Some others would have the sense of it thus interpreted; I could wish you were made partakers of the true faith, though I were as yet alienated from it.

Dr. Hammond. Others by this phrase of *Anathema from Christ*, suppose to be meant Excommunication from the Church, which is the body of Christ, with those consequences, which did commonly ensue upon it; ὄλεθρος σάρκος *the destruction of the flesh*, *i. e.* several diseases and temporal afflictions, which the Apostle was content to undergo for his brethrens sake.

'Tis observed by some, that amongst the *Jews* (unto whose customs and practice the *Apostle* doth here allude) there were two sorts of *Anathema's*, the one styled *Niddui*, by which men were debarred the external Communion of the Church for the space of 30 days: The other *Cherem*, which did extend to a perpetual exclusion from the Church by execrations and curses. The *Apostle* he stiles it *Anathema Maranatha*. 'Tis thought that his wish in this place, doth allude only

to

to the firſt of theſe, and doth import only his being content to undergo ſome temporary, ſhort ſeparation from the Church-privileges, and from the conſolations of Chriſt, but not an eternal ſeparation from the Spirit and Grace of Chriſt.

Others would have this to be the ſenſe of the words, as if he ſhould have ſaid, I could be content for my brethrens ſake, not only to want the honour of my Apoſtleſhip, but in reſpect of my outward condition, to be the moſt contemptible amongſt Chriſtians, as thoſe are who are Anathematized or Excommunicated.

That which to me ſeems the moſt rational ſolution of this difficult Scripture, is to look upon it as an Hyperbolical expreſſon (of which we have ſeveral other inſtances in Scripture) which are not to be interpreted according to the ſtrict literal ſenſe of the words, but according to the drift of the ſpeaker: St *Paul* being under great prejudices amongſt his Country-men as an enemy to them, for his defection from them, and adhering to the Chriſtian aſſemblies, doth endeavour to vindicate himſelf from thoſe prejudices,

judices, by a most solemn protestation, that there was nothing imaginable, and possible for him to do or suffer, for their benefit, but what he was most ready and willing unto. So far was he from deserving to be thought their enemy: Which sense seems likewise to be favoured by the verb εὐχόμην, *optarim*, the potential; I could wish, answerable to that other place, *Gal.* 4. 15. *I bear you record, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.*

Hence it is easy to collect what we are to judge of those expressions like to this, ascribed to divers others. That of one of the Popish Saints, who wished that she her self might be cast into Hell, upon that condition that she might stop the mouth of it, so that none might ever enter afterwards. That of *Anselm*: That if Hell and Sin were set before him, he would rather chuse Hell, than Sin: That he had rather be in Hell without Sin, than in Heaven with it. That of *another*, that he did not so much fear and hate the torments, as the blasphemies of the damned; with divers the like expressions frequent in the Popish *Legend*, and *Mystical* Divines.

Loyola.

Now

Now I ſay, though it is poſſible that ſuch kind of ſpeeches may proceed from thoſe that are good, in ſome ſpecial zeal and heat of their affections, yet they are not from a ſerious conſiderate judgment, but being compared with the rule will be found to be unwary boaſting expreſſions, pretending to a higher degree of ſanctity than men are capable of, or than is required from them.

I fear I have been too long in confirmation of this Point: I ſhall be but very brief in the Application of it.

1. This may ſerve to confute that common and uncomfortable error, ſo frequenly vented both from the *Pulpit*, and the *Preſs*, *namely*, That 'tis not enough to prove our ſincerity, that we are able to do good out of love to the reward, and ſo to aviod evil for fear of puniſhment; wicked men may go ſo far; every one that is ſanctified, muſt be able to hate ſin chiefly for its own deformity, and to love goodneſs for its own comelineſs and beauty, and ſo far make the glory of God his chief aim (not any reſpect of his own) that if his damnation might conduce more

to God's glory, he were bound to desire that, rather than to be saved: Unto those that talk at this rate, I might suggest that advice of the Wiseman, *Eccles.* 7. 16. *Be not righteous over-much, neither make thy self over-wise, why shouldst thou destroy thy self?* That is, do not pretend to such holiness, as thou art not capable of, *this is to be over-righteous*; do not invent such precepts as the Scripture doth not prescribe, this is *to be over-wise*; by limiting salvation unto such rules as thou art not able to conform unto, thou mayest be said *to destroy thy self.* It would be a sufficient confutation of such men, if they could impartially examine their own hearts, what that motive is which hath the chief influence upon them in all their difficult services, whether or no it be not, or should not be, the promises of the Gospel apprehended by faith; and if so, it may be a sufficient shame and check to them for the venting of such doctrines, according to which they themselves must needs remain in a comfortless condition: St. *Paul* reckons upon it as being a good degree of grace, that

that he was able to look more *at the things which are not ſeen, than upon the things which are ſeen.* 2 Cor. 4. 18.

'Tis the folly and peeviſhneſs of our natures to run into extremities of all kinds: As, the generality of men on the one hand to licentiouſneſs and prophaneſs; ſo ſome on the other, to frame unto themſelves ſuch rules of holineſs as God doth not require, being *wiſe above that which is written.* Some of the *School men* and *Myſtical Divines* have been ſo rigid in this kind, that the *Council of Trent* were fain to make a particular *Canon* againſt them. Wherein they denounce an *Anathema* unto any one who ſhall ſay, *'tis unlawful for a man to avoid ſin out of the fear of Hell.* Seſſ. 6. Can. 8.

It cannot be denied but that there is a vaſt difference amongſt men, in reference to their performance of duties; as for an unregenerate perſon, he cannot ſet about any good duty without much pain and diſquietneſs; ſpiritual ſervices are utterly againſt the bent of his inclinations; when he is engag'd in them he is out of his element, like a Fiſh in the air.

Whereas on the contrary, the more any one grows in grace, the more his nature is ſpiritualized, the more amiableneſs does he ſee in the ways of God, and he can walk in them with a kind of complacency and naturalneſs, as better agreeing with his ſanctified deſires; and ſometimes perhaps the thought of God's excellencies, may in reſpect of ſenſe be actually more incumbent and preſſing upon his Spirit, than the conſideration of reward; but that which in a man's general courſe, is the root and principal encouragement againſt all difficulties, muſt be this recompence of reward.

2. Let us be exhorted to imitate this Eample in the Text: In all our temptations and difficulties, to propoſe unto our ſelves thoſe great and precious promiſes which are offered in the Scriptures.

Learn to judge concerning the true difference of things, and to value them according to their real worth, and to prefer the things that are not ſeen. It is in this place your trade and buſineſs, to be skilled in all the advantages of Exchange, and it will be a very great

ſhame

ſhame and folly for men that profeſs Chriſtianity, ſo to be immerſed in theſe preſent ſenſual things as to neglect their future hopes. 'Tis obſervable how the Scripture doth in ſeveral places ſet forth this recompence of reward, under ſuch kind of deſcriptions as might render it moſt deſirable to all ſorts of men: Sometimes 'tis ſtiled *Riches*, *hid Treaſure*, a *Pearl* or *Jewel of ineſtimable value*: Sometimes *Honour*, the *ſitting upon a Throne*, the *inheritance of a Kingdom*, a *Crown of Life and Glory*: Sometimes *delight*, *fulneſs of joy*, *Rivers of pleaſures*; that men might not be tempted by any thing elſe, to a neglect of this. And therefore in every particular temptation, whether of allurement or danger, we are to fly for refuge unto the hope that is ſet before us, remembring that *great and terrible day of the Lord*, &c.

The true reaſon why men are ſo eaſily overcome by theſe preſent worldly hopes and fears, is becauſe they do not labour to ſtrengthen and to ſtir up their Faith, in reſpect of thoſe future things which are not ſeen. It

could not be, if men did really believe and consider what they profess, that they should be so foolish *as to run upon mischief, and forsake their own mercies.* It was a considerable advantage to *Moses* to be looked upon as *the son of* Pharaoh's *daughter*, and yet he esteemed this as nothing in comparison of the inheritance of a far better Kingdom, and therefore he despised all other things that came in competition with *that.* We have none of us perhaps so great temptations, but yet we have as great encouragements as he, having a share in the same promises, and being partakers of the like hopes; and therefore we ought to be very much ashamed, upon every slight occasion to walk so unanswerably to them. Though some men may have greater temptations than others, yet this is our privilege, that no man can have so great temptation to sin as he has to his duty.

Do but consider the advice of the *Apostle*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. Speaking of a Christians future happiness, *Wherefore, beloved, since you look for such things, be diligent, that ye be found in peace without spot,*

ſpot, and blameleſs. Let me add the like ſpeech of another *Apoſtle*, with which I ſhall conclude, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Since we have ſuch promiſes*, and entertain ſuch expectations, *Let us therefore cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.*

The End of the Firſt Sermon.

The Second Sermon.

Rom. XIV. 17, 18.

For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.
For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.

THere is nothing of greater importance towards the healing of the minds of men, than to have a right underſtanding of thoſe Principles, by which they profeſs to be guided in their differences. Now tho it ſhould be granted that ſome of the *Leaders* amongſt all Parties, are chiefly ſwayed by their particular intereſts and deſires of dominion; yet becauſe they have done, and

and will always pretend, at leaſt, to found their differences upon grounds of Religion, whereby thoſe that are *Followers* amongſt them are heated to a zeal and eagerneſs in oppoſition of one another: Therefore it is of very great conſequence that men ſhould be rightly informed, what Religion is? Wherein it chiefly conſiſts? What are the main things to be contended for about it? How men ſhould demean themſelves in matters of leſſer moment? In what method the obligation of things is to be ſtated? And in brief, how they ſhould ſo order their converſations, as to be both *accepted of God, and approved of men?* Than which nothing can more effectually conduce to that general peace and ſettlement, which theſe Nations are now in expectation of: To which purpoſe I have made choice of this *Text.*

The occaſion and dependance of the Words is this.

There being in thoſe Primitive times many Converts, as well amongſt the *Gentiles* as *Jews*, that different way wherein they had been ſeverally inſtituted, did by accident prove a great impediment to their joyning together

ther for promoting the work of the Goſpel.

The *Gentiles* having been before given up to a moſt irrational way of Worſhip of dumb Idols, which had no tolerable plea for the reaſon or inſtitution of it, were upon their receiving of Chriſtianity, wholly won over to the ſimplicity of the Goſpel. Whereas the *Jews* having been educated in another way of Worſhip, injoyned by God himſelf, confirmed with many miracles, by the hand of *Moſes*, whoſe Doctrine and Laws for a long time together had been preached amongſt them, in every City, being *read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day*, Act. 15. 21. They could not ſo eaſily be won over to embrace the Goſpel, ſo as wholly to renounce all their legal inſtitutions, but were apt to think that ſome of them might very well conſiſt together with Chriſtianity.

There are two inſtances which the Apoſtle doth particularly inſiſt upon, in this *Chapter*, that of *meats*, and *days*. Nothing was more deteſtable among the *Jews*, than to eat of their *forbidden meats*; and there was no kind of torment but they would undergo, rather

2 *Maccab. Chap.* 7.

rather than be induced to offend in this kind; as having radicated in them a general abhorrency from ſuch things, grounded upon Religion.

And as for the obſervation of *Days* wherein the ſolemnity of Worſhip did conſiſt, it could not be expected but that the Religious *Jews* muſt needs be much prejudiced againſt any ſuch way as did pretend to an abolition of them.

Now in this caſe, there were but *two* ways of obviating this difference: 1. Either the *Apoſtles* muſt inſiſt upon their Apoſtolical Authority, and by ſome *Canon* or Decree condemn theſe Superſtitious Scruples; they themſelves having been the chief Preachers of the Goſpel, and confirmed it by many ſigns and miracles, might with reaſon expect, that they ſhould be owned as infallible Judges, in a controverſy of this nature, in whoſe determination others ought to acquieſce. And there are but few men in the World, ingaged in Parties, who upon ſuch an advantage would not rather have enclined to this courſe. Or elſe, 2. They muſt find out ſome expedient for this difference, to accommodate

modate matters unto the preſent ſtate of things, and to moderate the rigor on either hand. And it ſeemed good to the *Holy Ghoſt* and to the *Apoſtles*, rather to take this way, which is the main ſcope of this Chapter. Wherein the *Apoſtle* lays down ſeveral rules to regulate mens carriage in caſes of this nature.

1. To forbear offenſive diſputes about theſe things, *verſ.* 1.

2. To avoid deſpiſing and condemning one another upon this account. He that hath a clear light concerning his own juſt liberty, muſt not deſpiſe another who comes ſhort in this perſuaſion; and the other muſt not judge him, as being looſe and irreligious in doing more than he ought, *v.* 3. This he confirms by theſe Reaſons.

1. You have no commiſſion and authority to *judge another mans ſervant*, verſ. 4.

2. Tho you both differ about theſe controverted Points, yet you both agree in theſe other Rules, that no Man ought *to put a ſtumbling-block, or occaſion to fall, in his brother's way*, verſ. 13. And that every one ought *to walk chari-*

charitably, v. 15. And to take care *that their good be not evil ſpoken of*, v. 16. And the Rules in which both ſides do agree, ought not to be violated in the proſecution of thoſe things about which they differ: And then in the words of the *Text*, he pitches upon another cogent reaſon to the ſame purpoſe, Becauſe *the Kingdom of God* conſiſts not in ſuch things as were of the ſame and the like nature with the controverted Points; ſuch things are no indication of a man's good or bad ſtate, and therefore you ought not to judge of mens conditions by them; but in thoſe more weighty and ſubſtantial duties of *righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*; whoſoever lays out his ſtrength and zeal in things of this nature, ſhall be ſure (though he do miſtake in other matters) to be both *accepted of God, and approved of men.* That's the connexion of the words:

The *Text* contains a deſcription of thoſe chief things wherein Religion conſiſts.

1. The *thing deſcribed.*
2. The *deſcription* it ſelf.

By that phraſe, *the Kingdom of God*, is

is meant, Chriſtianity, or the ſtate of Religion under the Government of the *Meſſiah*, which was by the *Jews* commonly ſtiled the *Age of the* Meſſiah, *or the Kingdom of God*, according to that famous Prophecy of *Daniel*, c. 2. v. 44. That *the God of heaven ſhould ſet up a kingdom which ſhould never be deſtroyed, but ſhould ſtand for ever.* Conformably whereunto the *Apoſtle* to the *Hebrews*, c. 12. v. 28. calls the ſtate and diſpenſation of the Goſpel *a kingdom which cannot be moved.*

This is *deſcribed* both by the *Matter*, *Principle*, and *Effects* of it:

1. The *Object matter*, wherein it conſiſts, and that both *Negatively* and *Poſitively.*

1. *Negatively*, *'Tis not meat and drink*, that is, it conſiſts not in, or is not to be judged of by thoſe more circumſtantial parts of Religion, referring to external obſervances; which as to the acts of them may be performed by all kind of Perſons, whether good or bad; and do not neceſſarily ſuppoſe or require any habitual goodneſs to the doing of them. Not but that 'twas a ſin to neglect theſe under the law, and 'twas a duty to be rightly perſwaded concern-

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ing our liberty from them under the Goſpel; but yet not of ſuch moment or conſequence, that a man might hereby judge of his own or another's ſtate.

2. *Poſitively*, But in *righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* That is, in ſuch internal habits and diſpoſitions of the ſoul, whereby the mind is renewed and changed, and made conformable to the image of God; particularly,

1. *Righteouſneſs*, δικαιοσυνη, this is twofold: 1. *Imputed*, ſtiled the righteouſneſs of Faith: Of which the *Apoſtle* had treated at large in the eleven firſt Chapters of this *Epiſtle*.

2. *Inherent*, that is ſuch a ſanctification of the nature, whereby a man is carried on to a univerſal conformity unto the Moral Law, both in reſpect of the firſt and ſecond Table. Which latter ſeems to be more immediately intended in this place, becauſe it may more properly be conſidered under the notion of a duty, and is likewiſe the moſt obvious and natural ſign, whereby a man may judge of his eſtate: And is elſewhere called *grace*, in oppoſition to *meats*, Heb. 13. 9.

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It is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

2. *Peace*, εἰρήνη, this Word alſo is capable of a twofold ſenſe. 1. It may ſignify a quiet ſtate of mind, ariſing from an aſſurance of our reconciliation with God. In which ſenſe it is to be underſtood *Rom.* 5. 1. *Being juſtified by Faith, we have peace with God.* This is ſometimes ſtiled εὐθυμία, and is rather a privilege than a duty. Or elſe 2. It may ſignify the grace of *Peaceableneſs*, the deſire and ſtudy of promoting peace amongſt one another, a readineſs and willingneſs of mind to agree with ſuch in affection from whom we differ in judgment. And this is properly our duty, being ſometimes ſtiled εἰρηνοποίησις and φιλησυχία, which though it be but a branch of that general righteouſneſs ſignified in the former Word, yet the *Apoſtle* thought fit to ſpecify this in particular, becauſe of its ſuitableneſs to the buſineſs in hand. And that this is the proper ſenſe of the Word in this place, may appear by *v.* 19. where he returns again to a further enforcing of this duty, *Let*

us therefore follow after the things which make for peace.

3. *Joy in the Holy Ghoſt:* This phraſe likewiſe is capable of a *twofold* ſenſe. 1. It may ſignify a *bleſſing* or *privilege*, conſiſting in the enlargement of the Soul, by the ſhining in of the light of God's Countenance, when he is pleaſed to ſhed abroad a ſenſe of his love in our hearts, and by that means to fill us *with joy unſpeakable and glorious.* Or 2. *A Grace* or *Duty*, which Chriſtians are bound to labour after, and to attain: and that is, quiet ſubmiſſion to every diſpenſation of providence, an ability of rejoycing in an afflicted eſtate, as being acted by principles above theſe ſenſible things. This is elſewhere ſtiled, *rejoycing in hope*, Rom. 5. 2. —— 12. 12. And in another place, 1 *Theſ.* 1. 6. the *Apoſtle* doth particularly explain what he means by this *joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, namely the bearing of affliction with joy; *ye received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* 'Tis ſtiled by this name for its oppoſition to the joy of the World, which is grounded only upon external proſperity; whereas that which muſt ſupport a man under

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an afflicted eſtate, is ſomething of an higher nature.

2. Religion is here deſcribed by its *principle* or *end*, *Whoſoever in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt.* There muſt be a ſerving of Chriſt in theſe things, that is, 'tis not the mere performance of ſuch moral duties as are of natural obligation, unleſs they be done in obedience to him as our Lord and Law-giver, and in reliance upon him, for his pardon and acceptance as our Prieſt and Saviour that can make us *acceptable to Chriſt*, or entitle us to the name of *Chriſtians.*

3. From the *fruits* and *effects* of it. It renders a man *acceptable to God and approved of men.* 1. *Accepted of God* εὐάρεστος τῷ Θεῷ, well-pleaſing to God. 'Tis the ſame with that Word, *Acts* 10. 35. *In every Nation he that feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted with him.* 2. *Approved of men*, δόκιμος; 'tis an expreſſion frequently applied to gold, to ſignify its purity and excellency; and to money in general to expreſs its currantneſs. So the *Septuagint*, Gen. 23. 16. ἀργύριον δόκιμον, currant money. And from thence 'tis tranſlated to ſignifie the integrity

of perſons, ſuch as paſs for currant and approved amongſt all ſorts of men.

The Words thus explained may very properly afford theſe *three Obſervations.*

1. That there are ſome things in Religion, wherein a man may be very forward and zealous, and yet fall ſhort of the Kingdom of God, *'Tis not meat and drink.*

2. There are other things in Religion, wherein if a man be faithful and ſincere, he ſhall be accepted by God, tho he ſhould miſtake and fall ſhort of his duty in other things, *But righteouſneſs and peace,* &c.

3. The Reaſon why Chriſtians of ſeveral perſuaſions are leſs approved to one another, is becauſe they lay out more of their zeal and ſtrength in thoſe leſſer things, *meat and drink*, than in thoſe of greater conſequence.

Prop. I. I. *There are ſome things in Religion wherein a Man may be very forward and zealous, and yet fall ſhort of the Kingdom of God.*

Not as if theſe things were to be deſpiſed or neglected; they are matters of Religion, and therefore muſt be of con-

conſequence. And 'tis a man's duty to labour after a right perſuaſion concerning the juſt bounds of his liberty. And 'tis no leſs than a ſin and ſuperſtition for a man to be needleſly ſcrupulous in ſuch things. But yet theſe things are not ſo eſſential to a ſtate of grace, but that, as on the one hand a miſtake in them ſhall not prove ſo pernicious as to make a man (who is otherwiſe ſincere) incapable of the Kingdom of God: So neither is a right perſuaſion or a zeal in them, ſo eſſentially good as to entitle a man to it.

To the ſame purpoſe is that *Text*, 1 Cor. 8. 8. *Meat commendeth not a Man to God: for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worſe.* Heb. 13. 9. *'Tis good that the heart be eſtabliſhed with gracce, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been buſied therein.*

Gal. 6. 5. *In Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love.* And elſewhere 'tis ſaid, *bodily exerciſe profiteth little*; with ſeveral other the like Scriptures, which I cannot ſtand to enumerate.

I ſhall breifly ſuggeſt theſe two *Reaſons* of the *Point*.

1. Becauſe theſe things *do not make us the better*, as was ſaid in that forecited place, 1 *Cor.* 8. 8. And therefore cannot entitle us to the Kingdom of God. *They profit not*, Heb. 13. 9. That is, they are not effectual to the things of greateſt conſequence. They do not improve a man as to his ſtate of holineſs, his real intrinſical worth. There is not any natural moral good in them, but they are ſo denominated, becauſe we do hereby exerciſe our moral righteouſneſs and obedience, which is good in it ſelf: Theſe things are mere *externals*, whereas the *Kingdom of God* is chiefly *internal* and *ſpiritual*.

2. Becauſe theſe kind of Services do not neceſſarily require or ſuppoſe that which is the very life and power of Religion, but are things of another kind and ſphere, and might be obſerved upon other by-ends. A *Jew* might have nothing at all of inward grace in his heart, and yet be very ſcrupulous in the obſervance of *meats* and *days*. And uſually men think to compenſate their want of the ſubſtance

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of Religion, by their zeal in circumſtantials: And beſides, any external act of Religion, ſuppoſe dying for it, may be performed upon ſuch natural principles, as are wholly heterogeneous to it. So that theſe things do neither make us holy, nor ſuppoſe us to be ſo; and therefore can be no good evidence.

The *Uſe* and Application of this ſhould be to enquire, What things there are now in controverſy amongſt us in theſe times, anſwerable to theſe differences about *meat* and *drink*, and to proportion our demeanour towards one another in reference to ſuch things, according to the Rules here preſcribed.

It is not very eaſy, nor perhaps would it be prudent, to enumerate any particular liſt of ſuch things as are now under debate amongſt us in theſe times: But you may know them by theſe three general Notes.

1. They are ſuch things as are not againſt natural light, otherwiſe they would have a moral vitiouſneſs in them, and be oppoſite to that righteouſneſs mentioned in the other clauſe.

2. They are ſuch things as good men, true believers, may and do differ about.

3. They are ſuch things as wicked men and hypocrites may be very zealous for, or againſt, on both ſides. Whatever the thing be, either concerning Practice or Opinion, which comes under all theſe notes (not any one of them) it may be ſafely brought under the ſame Rules that are here given concerning the differences about *meats* and *drinks:* Namely theſe *three.*

1. Firſt not to think our ſelves better men than others, for our advantages in things of this nature. The *Apoſtle* ſaith *they do not commend us to God*, and therefore ſhould not commend us to our ſelves. He ſaith they do not make us better, and therefore we ſhould not think our ſelves better for them. And beſides they are common to hypocrites and wicked men, and upon that account cannot be any ſpecial arguments of our goodneſs.

2. We are not to think the worſe of others for their differences of this nature, ſo as to deſpiſe them, or cenſure them. It cannot be, but that we muſt needs think the worſe of their actions

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or opinions; becauſe whoever judges himſelf to be in the right, muſt needs conclude thoſe of an oppoſite perſuaſion or practice to be in the wrong: But we are not upon this account to cenſure ſuch perſons as to their eſtates and conditions, as if they were not ſincerely Religious, nor in favour with God. For though they ſhould be erroneous and miſtaken in their judgments in ſuch things, yet if their converſation be more juſt and righteous than ours, if more humble and peaceable, they are thereupon to be accounted better than we are; both more *acceptable of God*, and more *approved of men.*

3. We are not to proſecute any Truth or Duty of this nature, to the prejudice of ſuch things as are of greater moment. There are ſeveral *Truths* which are not of ſo great conſequence as *peace*, and *unity*, and *charity*. And therefore in ſuch things there ought to be a mutual forbearance towards one another; and men ſhould endeavour by all means of amity and kindneſs to joyn together, for the promoting of thoſe more ſubſtantial Truths and Duties, wherein they agree according

ding to that Rule of the *Apoſtle*, Philip. 3. 15, 16. *And if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you: Nevertheleſs whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing.*

There are *two* things by which men are uſually provoked to heat and eagerneſs, in their differences of this kind. 1. A falſe apprehenſion of the weight and neceſſity of their opinions, by reaſon of thoſe conſequences which they faſten to them, and will have to ſtand or fall with them. And 2. An apprehenſion of their great clearneſs and perſpicuity, upon which account they conceive no man ought to oppoſe them. Now this caſe in the *Text* wants not pretences of either kind: 'Twere not difficult to infer very dangereous conſequences from the joyning together of *Moſaical* obſervances, with Chriſtian Religion; and then whatever any mans perſuaſion may be, as to the certainty and perſpicuity of his particular opinion, I am ſure he cannot have greater, better grounds of confidence, than there were for this caſe in the Text about *meats* and *drinks*. Where beſides the evidence from the nature

nature of the thing, there was likewise most expreſs *Apoſtolical* authority, for the ſtating the queſtion, that the legal inſtitutions about meats and drinks were aboliſhed. And yet, out of tender reſpect to thoſe who had contrary prejudices, they were not to trouble them with unneceſſary diſputes, but to *bear their infirmities*, and *every one to ſtudy how to pleaſe his neighbour for his good to edification*, Chap. 15. ver. 1.

If it be objected, That St. *Paul* elſewhere ſhews much zeal and vehemence about theſe very points of *Moſaical* obſervances, as where he calls the great ſticklers for them *Dogs*, *Conciſion*, wiſhes them *cut off*, &c. To this it may be anſwered:

1. This vehemence of his is directed againſt falſe brethren, ſuch contentious perſons as were not ſincere, *Philip.* 1. 16. And *Pareus* thinks this was after that ſolemn determination of this caſe in an *Apoſtolical Council*, *Acts* 15.

2. It was for want of this candor and moderation which here he adviſes unto. Becauſe they laid ſo great weight upon their Opinions as to make

make them neceſſary to ſalvation; and would not indulge or ſhew forbearance towards one another for theſe kind of differences.

3. For the ſcandal hereby occaſioned, which is a moral evil; and upon this account he is ſometimes pretty quick and warm, even againſt ſuch as were ſincere and good men. This was the ground of that conteſt betwixt him and *Peter*, *Gal.* 2. 11. The caſe was this: St. *Peter* was the Apoſtle of the Circumciſion, having a more peculiar relation to the *Jewiſh* Converts; yet when he reſided at *Antioch*, where there lived multitudes of converted *Gentiles*, it was his uſual practice moſt freely to converſe and eat with them, as owning them for brethren: But afterwards, when ſome *Jews* were ſent thither from *Jeruſalem*, out of fear to offend them, he wholly withdrew and ſeparated himſelf from all converſation with the *Gentiles*; and by his example, the other believiug *Jews* were likewiſe carried away to the ſame practice, as if they had ſo great a zeal for *Moſaical* obſervances, that they could not own ſuch as did not obſerve them. Now this the A-

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poſtle *Paul* ſtyles *diſſembling*, v. 13. *Not walking uprightly according to the truth of the Goſpel*, v. 14. In which reſpect there was a moral evil in it, towards which we are not bound to ſhew the ſame tenderneſs. And it was a thing of ſo dangerous conſequence, in reſpect of diſcouragement and ſcandal to all the *Gentiles*, that upon this occaſion St. *Paul withſtood him to the face.* Which carriage of his, was not oppoſite, but moſt ſuitable unto that advice of tenderneſs and forbearance which is here preſcribed.

To ſhut up all in a word; it would exceedingly conduce to our common peace and ſettlement, in times of differences and controverſy, if thoſe Rules of Chriſtianity ſo often inculcated in Scripture, were more regarded and obſerved amongſt the Profeſſors of it.

That men would *be wiſe unto ſobriety*, and *not above what is written.* Not *thinking more highly of themſelves* and their abilities *than they ought*, Rom. 12. 3. But be ready *to condeſcend to men of lower parts*, v. 16. And to demean our ſelves towards every one according

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ding to the *different measure of gifts*, which God hath been pleased to dispense to them; *speaking the truth in love*, Ephes. 4. 15. Endeavouring to heal differences in the most placid gentle manner, without *envyings*, *strifes*, *backbitings*, *whisperings*, 2 Cor. 12. 20. *Doing nothing through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind, every one esteeming others better than himself*, Phil. 2. 3. They that exceed others in knowledge, should exceed them likewise in the study of peace. The best of us do now *know but in part*, *darkly*; that time is to come, when all these differences shall be cleared up, and we shall have a full vision of the true state of things. In the mean space it concerns us to forbear one another in those lesser things about which we differ: And to be very zealous about those great matters in which we agree, namely, *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

II. *Prop.* II. *There are some things in Religion, wherein if a man faithfully serve Christ, he shall be accepted by him, tho he should mistake and fall short of his duty in other things.*

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That is, if a man be truly conſcientious and ſincere in thoſe more ſubſtantial duties of *righteouſneſs*, and *peace*, and *joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, it is not his miſtakes or failings in other leſſer things that ſhall make him incapable of the Kingdom of God.

There are ſeveral expreſſions in Scripture, whereby theſe more eſſential and neceſſary parts of Religion are diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of leſſer conſequence, *Heb.* 13. 9. They are comprehended under that general name of *Grace*, in oppoſition to *meats*. *'Tis good that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace, not with meats*, Matth. 23. 23. They are ſtiled *the weighty matters of the law: judgment, mercy, faith love*, in oppoſition to *the tithing of mint and cummin*. Very frequently *Obedience* in oppoſition to *Sacrifice*: To be *waſhed* and *cleanſed, putting away the evil of our doings, learning to do well, ſeeking to do judgment*, in oppoſition to *incenſe, oblations*, and *new moons*, &c. Iſa. 1. 1. *Circumciſion of the fleſh, outward* and *according to the letter*, and *circumciſion of the heart, inward* and *according to the Spirit*.

I ſhall mention only one Scripture for proof of the Point: 1 *Cor.* 3. 11, 12. If a man hold to the foundation *which is Jeſus Chriſt*, though *he build* upon this foundation *Gold and Silver, precious Stones* or *wood, hay, ſtuble, the fire ſhall try it, if it be burnt he ſhall ſuffer loſs, but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved.*

By *Gold, Silver* and *precious ſtones*, is meant pure and ſolid Doctrine; by the other, *wood, hay*, and *ſtubble*, is ſignified ſuch vain erroneous Doctrine, as cannot endure the teſt of fire, the fire of Affliction and Temptation, the fire of the Spirit which ſearcheth and proveth hidden things, or the fire of the laſt day, but will be diſcovered and conſumed by them, to the loſs of all that pains and coſt which men have laid out in ſuch ſuperſtructions: But not to the ruine of the Builder, for *he himſelf ſhall be ſaved.*

If I were to give Inſtances and Examples for the confirmation of this truth, there is no holy man, mere man, that ever was in the world, but may ſerve as a witneſs to it. Not to mention the ancient *Patriatchs, Prophets*, the *Apoſtles* themſelves, who were none of them without

without their miſtakes and failings at ſome time or other; it were not difficult to produce a very large Catalogue of errors, out of the Writings of the ancient Fathers: Who tho they were the great Maſter-builders of their times, and by their holineſs, zeal, learning, ſufferings, did in their generations exceedingly promote the work of the Goſpel; yet they were not without their *hay* and *ſtubble*; every one of them being obnoxious to errors, and ſome of them to none of the leaſt: Both *Irenæus* and *Juſtin Martyr*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Origen*, *Hierom*, and *Auguſtin* more than ever he retracted: But that it would in many reſpects be inconvenient to uncover their nakedneſs. And thoſe amongſt us in theſe days, who either really are, or are eſteemed to be, the great Luminaries of Religion, they are not greater than the *Fathers* were in their times. Many of the ſuperſtructions which they lay out ſo much care and coſt upon, will prove but mere *hay* and *ſtubble*, when they come to a trial *by fire*.

I ſhall but mention theſe two Reaſons of the Point.

1. From the nature of *Man*, to which nothing is more incident than frailty and error. He was a good man that ſaid, *Who can underſtand his errors?* not only of his practice, but his judgment too. And he, who in another place, *In many things we offend all.* If any one ſhould ſay he hath no error, That man hath not the truth in him. Now if mens integrity in the more ſubſtantial parts of Religion did not ſecure them, notwithſtanding theſe errors and failings, no man living could be ſaved.

2. From the nature of Religion, which comprehends under it things of ſeveral natures and degrees. There are ſome things *eſſential, ſubſtantial, fundamental*; other things *circumſtantial*, *accidental*. Religion is compared to a building, it is not a covering of the roof with thatch, or leaving a flaw in the wall, but only a failing or breach in the Foundation, that will cauſe the fall or ruine of it. Again, 'tis compared to a new life and nature. Now it is not a blackneſs of the viſage, or deformity of the members, nor every hurt or wound of the body, that ſhall prove mortal, ſo long as the vital parts remain ſound and intire: And on the other

other ſide, a hurt in the vitals would prove mortal, though the countenance were never ſo beautiful. But 'tis a principle this, ſo very obvious and plain, and without any diſpute, that it will be needleſs to inſiſt any longer upon the confirmation of it.

In the *Application* of this Point I ſhall inſiſt only upon two *Uſes*, of *Examination*, and *Exhortation*.

I. For *Examination*: If it be ſo that ſome things are of ſuch abſolute neceſſity to our happineſs, it will concern us then to examine and judge our ſelves by theſe things. Nothing is more deſirable, than for a man to know upon good grounds the truth of his own eſtate and condition, in reſpect of his intereſt in the kingdom of God; and nothing can better diſcover this, than our *ſerving of Chriſt* in *righteouſneſs*, *peace*, and *joy in the Holy Ghoſt*.

1. For *Righteouſneſs*; by this I told you before, we are to underſtand an univerſal conformity to the moral Law, both firſt and ſecond Table, with ſubordination to the grace of faith. Now this, as it concerns the duties of the firſt Table, is properly called *Holineſs*; and as it refers to the ſecond Table, *Juſtice*

or *Righteouſneſs*; who even allows himſelf in a neglect or violation of either of theſe, whatever he may think of himſelf, is not *accepted of God.* 1. As for *Holineſs*, we are told expreſly, that *without it no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* And elſewhere 'tis ſaid, *the pure in heart ſhall ſee God.* He that doth either generally omit or neglect the duties of God's worſhip, and hath not an holy awe and dread upon his mind towards matters of Religion, but can deal with ſacred things with the ſame ſlight and common affection, wherewith he manages other ordinary matters, hath juſt reaſon to ſuſpect himſelf as *coming ſhort of the Kingdom of God.* 2. And ſo likewiſe for that other righteouſneſs of the ſecond Table, referring unto *Juſtice* in our dealings with one another: Tho the having of this be not enough to entitle us to the Kingdom of God, yet the want of it is enough to bar us from it. 'Tis ſo ſuitable to the light of nature, ſo neceſſary to humane ſociety, that there is not any one kind of failing that doth more ſcandalize the profeſſion of Religion, or render it leſs approved amongſt men, than offences of this kind, eſpecially ſuch

Heb. 12. 14.
Mat. 5. 8.

such as are done upon pretence of Religion.

2. As for *Peace*: Our Saviour tells us, *Matth.* 5. 9. *The peace-makers shall be called the children of God. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.* Joh. 13. 35. *Whereas there is envying, and strife, and division amongst you, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. The *Apostle* makes it his business, *Gal.* 5. 19. to set down such marks whereby men may judge of their conditions, both in respect of the fruits of the flesh, and of the spirit. And amongst the fruits of the flesh, he hath no less than seven several expressions to this purpose; *Hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, envyings.* And then he subjoyns, *ver.* 21. *They who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* And in the next *verse*, when he comes to reckon up the *fruits of the spirit*, he mentions but nine particulars, and of them there are six that refer to this grace, *The fruit of the spirit is love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, against such there is no law.* The *New Testament* is so frequent and so express in this point, that a man of an un-

peaceable contentious ſpirit muſt very groſly delude himſelf to build his confidence upon his zeal in leſſer matters, with the neglect of this.

3. And ſo in the *third* place, for *joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, that is, a cheerful and ſedate temper of mind, under all outward diſpenſations, though croſs to our particular hopes and deſires; as being ſecure of our intereſt in him who hath the management of all times and events at his own diſpoſal, and hath engaged himſelf by promiſe to order them ſo, as that they ſhall prove for the beſt to thoſe that love him. This is a duty frequently inſiſted upon in Scripture, and 'tis one main branch of that life of faith, which is proper to believers. And therefore thoſe froward, peeviſh profeſſors, who are never contented with any eſtate, but are always complaining, apt to interpret every thing for an injury, and unworthy dealing towards them, have upon this ground juſt cauſe to ſuſpect themſelves of much impotence, unbelief, pride, want of that lowlineſs and meekneſs of ſpirit, which the Goſpel doth require. If upon a ſtrict enquiry we find our ſelves wilfully, groſly

groſly negligent in theſe more ſubſtantial things, we have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect our conditions.

II. I have but one *Uſe* more, for *Exhortation*, with which I ſhall conclude this Point. To quicken and ſtir us up to lay out our ſtrength and zeal for the promoting of theſe things both in our ſelves and others. There cannot be any more effectual motive, as to our ſelves, than what I have already inſiſted upon, That nothing elſe can ſecure us without theſe, and that theſe will ſecure us without other things.

But beſides, theſe things, in reference to our doing good unto others, will be more effectual than any other abilities whatſoever. They are ſingular advantages for a man in his dealing with others, to have the gift of wiſdom, an ability of diſcerning ſpirits, of clearing and opening deep myſterious things, a mighty power of perſuading and convincing. But to all theſe, if a man were able in a caſe of doubt, and difficulty, to confirm what he preaches by a miracle, one would think, that were a moſt infallible way of ſubduing any oppoſition,

and carrying all before him. And yet all these advantages would signify nothing, without these moral foundations; and a keeping close to these, might in some measure be effectual without miracles. 'Tis a saying of a Reverend *Divine*, That if the Gospel were now to be planted again, all the miracles in the world would not be sufficient to make it take, whilst our morals are no better than they are. A miracle may strike a little wonderment at first, but good morality soaks and sinks to the heart. And therefore it were a most rational thing in a man to mistrust the truth of any Miracle which did tend to the prejudice of things morally good. And the Scripture in several places doth encourage to it. *Deut.* 13. 1. Upon which account it may be asserted, that the suitableness of the Doctrine of the Gospel, unto purest, highest *Morality*, did as much conduce to the spreading of it, as the *Miracles* whereby it was confirmed. And therefore when many of the Pharisees did pretend those wonderful acts of our Saviour to be done by Magical arts, and the help of the Devil, they were presently confuted by

Garbott Resurrect. of Christ.

Gal. 1. 8. 2 *Thes.* 2. 9. *Revel.* 16. 13.

by the holineſs of his doctrine; *Theſe are not the words of him that hath a Devil*, Joh. 10. 21. And what can be ſaid higher in the commendation of any thing, than that it is a teſt whereby to try even Miracles themſelves, and doth in ſome ſenſe give authoriry to them?

And therefore there is very good reaſon why we ſhould be excited to a great zeal in the promoting *righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* 'Tis true, ſubtle notions and queſtions are more the faſhion of the times, than theſe moral duties; but they are withal the diſeaſe of the times, and Profeſſors now if ever may be ſaid to be *ſick of Queſtions*, as the phraſe is, 1 *Tim.* 6. 4. Whereas theſe other things were Religion before any of theſe faſhions came into requeſt, and will be ſo when they are laid aſide and vaniſhed; As being founded upon that univerſal perpetual Law, written in every man's heart, which can never be either augmented, or diminiſht, or abrogated. *Nec per ſenatum aut populum ſolvi hac lege poſſumus.* No power can diſpenſe with this Law: Nor doth it need any interpreter to explain it. *Non erat alia*

Romæ,

Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia poſthac, ſed & omnes gentes, omni tempore, una lex & ſempiterna & immutabilis continebit, ſaith the *Roman Orator*. *'Tis the ſame in all places and in all times*; as proceeding from the Supreme Lawgiver, *towards whom he that will not yield obedience, muſt deny his own eſſence and dependence*; as he goes on very ſublimely and elegantly upon that ſubject.

I know many other things are neceſſary, as to our religious ſtate, beſides theſe *moral* Duties. But yet theſe are the primary foundations. And nothing elſe will be effectual without theſe.

The End of the ſecond Sermon.

The

The Third Sermon.

ROM. XIV. 17, 18.

For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.
For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.

III. *THE true reaſon why Chriſtians of ſeveral perſuaſions ſtand leſs approved towards one another, is for want of a right proportioning their zeal about matters of Religion, and becauſe they lay out more of their ſtrength in theſe leſſer things, than on thoſe of greater conſequence.* Prop. III.

There is no reaſon to expect that the minds of men ſhould ever be united to

to a mutual liking and approving of one another, till they can come to be more truly zealous, and more heartily concerned for thoſe *ſubſtantial* matters of *righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, than for thoſe *circumſtantials* of *meats* and *drinks*.

If we conſult the ſtate of the Primitive times, as 'tis repreſented in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, and the *Epiſtles*, we ſhall find that this was the occaſion both of raiſing and keeping up the differences amongſt the Chriſtians then, *namely*, the inſiſting more upon forms and parties, meats and days, ſome being for *Paul*, others for *Apollos*, others for *Cephas*, than upon the ſubſtance of duties. And the ſame likewiſe might be made evident from abundant teſtimony out of Eccleſiaſtical Writers, concerning the following Ages. And what hath been the ſtate of things in our own times, is ſufficiently obvious to any eaſy obſervation.

There are two heads of Reaſons or Argument, that I ſhall mention for proof of the Point.

1. From the nature and uſual conſequents of that zeal whereby men are engaged to theſe leſſer things.

2. From

2. From the nature and neceſſary fruits of mens being devoted to the more ſubſtantial things of Religion.

I. Zeal about theſe leſſer matters is not only conſiſtent with ſtrifes and diviſions, but is many times the very occaſion and fewel whereby they are begotten and continued amongſt men. What the *Apoſtle* ſaith concerning thoſe *queſtions* which he calls *fooliſh and unlearned*, is in ſome proportion true concerning ſuch other diſputes as are managed with greater vehemence than they ought; that from hence cometh *envy*, *ſtrife*, *railings*, *evil ſurmiſings*, 1 Tim. 6. 4. Let a man but look indifferently round about him, amongſt all the kinds of Parties in our times, even thoſe whom in his own judgment he eſteems the beſt, and then ſay, whether, both our common peace and the power of Religion hath not ſuffered exceedingly upon this account. When men have once given up themſelves to controverſies of this nature, tho they ſhould perhaps be on the right ſide, yet theſe conſequences do ordinarily follow upon it.

2 *Tim.* 2. 23. *Titus* 3. 9.

1. Such

1. Such men are narrowed in their judgments, liable to ſtrong prejudices upon very weak grounds.

2. Sowered in their ſpirits, becoming more cenſorious and rugged in their diſpoſitions.

3. Vitiated in their morals, declining in the duties of moral honeſty, neglecting the tyes of Relations, friendſhip, gratitude, and ſuch other things, as ſhould ſecure and ſweeten humane ſociety.

4. Cooled in their zeal and fervor towards the more ſubſtantial parts of Religion, whilſt they are wholly taken up with the proſecution of leſſer matters. That man hath converſed but a little in the world, or at leaſt made but ſlender obſervation, who hath not in theſe times met with abundance of examples to this purpoſe.

II. The *ſecond* Reaſon is from the nature of theſe more weighty and ſubſtantial matters of Religion, whoſe property it is to unite the minds of men, and heal their differences. There is a *twofold* notion under which the ſtrifes and contentions amongſt men may be conſidered, either as their *Sin* or *Judgment*.

Now

Now this laying out our ſelves upon the more ſubſtantial matters of Religion, will free a man from contention in both theſe reſpects.

1. As 'tis a *Sin:* by freeing us from, and ſtrengthening us againſt many of thoſe temptations to this ſin that others are expoſed unto. He that makes it his principal care to deal righteouſly in his converſation with others, will be ſure thereby to miniſter leſs occaſion of raiſing ſtrife, and hath the advantage of avoiding and compoſing thoſe heats that others would raiſe againſt him. If a man deſign this as his great buſineſs, to *follow the things that make for peace*, he will not be apt to be immerſed in Parties, or tranſported with particular Intereſts, or miſled by the affectation of ſingularity; but he will be always ready to put the beſt conſtruction upon things, to pity the infirmities, and forgive the injuries of others. He that is able to rejoyce in an afflicted condition, is thereby in a good meaſure freed from thoſe temptations of hopes and fears whereby others are engaged; and conſequently will be leſs concerned in the deſigns of men, or the iſſue of things: Such

an

an one knows how to be content with his preſent ſtate, and to be patient under ſufferings; and if he ſhould not prevail for thoſe things which others will needs contend with him about, yet he can be happy without them. In brief, Religion doth mortify thoſe inward luſts which are the firſt principles of contentions and diviſions without us. It makes a man meek and lowly, *blameleſs and harmleſs*; teaches him not to *revenge himſelf*, but *to overcome evil with good*; to *ſpeak evil of no man*; to be *no brawler*, not *to ſtrive*, but to be gentle and humble, *ſhewing all meekneſs to all men.*

2. Sometimes contentions and diviſions are Inflicted as a *judgment*, when the Lord is pleaſed to mix a perverſe ſpirit amongſt men, filling them with confuſion and diſorder, making them daſh one againſt another, till they are broken to pieces. Now this minding the *main* things of Religion, doth likewiſe conduce to the freeing of us from this. The *Text* tells us theſe things make us *acceptable to God*: εὐαρέστες Prov. 16. 7. *When a man's ways pleaſe the Lord, he will make his enemies to be at peace with him.* As God doth ſometimes

times puniſh diſobedience, by making a man's friends to become his enemies; ſo is he pleaſed to reward obedience by making a man's enemies to become his friends. He *hath the hearts of all men in his hands*, and can bend them as he pleaſeth; and he hath by promiſe engaged himſelf, either ſo to change their affections, that they ſhall be friends to us, or at leaſt ſo to reſtrain their hoſtility that they ſhall not hurt us, 1 *Pet.* 3. 13. *Who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?* If a man be truly religious and holy, and give himſelf up to ſuch courſes, as are even to the light of nature unqueſtionably good, it cannot be but that he muſt hereby acquire a reverence and eſteem even in the hearts of wicked men.

I know there is an Objection againſt this, which is obvious to every one, to which ſomething muſt be ſaid by way of anſwer. Did not our *Saviour* tell his diſciples, that they ſhould *be hated of all men for his ſake?* Matth. 10. 22. And doth not *David* complain of ſome that were enemies to him, for this very reaſon, *becauſe he was a follower of that which was good?* Pſal. 38. 20. *All*

that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3. 12. *Because ye are not of the world, therefore doth the world hate you*, Joh. 15. 19. with several other Scriptures; besides the constant experience of all Ages to the same purpose.

To this it may be answered, That 'tis true, there is in Nature, a necessary unavoidable enmity betwixt light and darkness, good and evil, *the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent.* And 'tis not the meaning of these promises to abolish or reconcile that enmity or opposition which is founded in the nature of things, but only to suspend the Acts of it. The more righteous any man is, by so much the greater opposition must there be betwixt him and sinners. But yet he is hereby after a more especial manner intitled to God's protection, to preserve him from any real hurt, or damage by them. And they are for the most part, the imperfections and failings of good men, that do expose them to sufferings of this nature. And then besides, though some men have such a *superfluity of maliciousness*, as the phrase is *Jam.* 1. 21. being hardned against the

the common principles of morality, as to expreſs a hatred and enmity againſt others for their goodneſs; yet it is not ſo with all, nor perhaps with any at all times. But the worſt of men, muſt in their ſecret judgments and moſt retired thoughts, bear an inward reverence towards thoſe that are good. As there is in vice a natural deformity, whereby it doth appear odious, even to the conſciences of thoſe who are guilty of it; ſo is there a beauty in holineſs and virtue, whereby it appears lovely even to thoſe mens hearts, whoſe mouths are apt to reproach it. It cannot be but that ſome men will be apt to ſpeak againſt us for well-doing. And yet *well doing* is the beſt way to *put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 15. Or if it do not wholly ſilence them, but that they will be ſpeaking *againſt us as evil doers*, yet 'tis not without ſome ſecret ſhame and guilt of being falſe accuſers, 1 *Pet.* 3. 16.

And ſo much may ſerve for the *proof* of the Point. I come now to the *Application* of it: Wherein it may ſerve for theſe two *Uſes*, *Inſtruction* and *Exhortation*.

I. *Information*: If it be ſo, that the minding of the main things of Religion, more than leſſer differences, be that which muſt render us *acceptable to God, and approved of men*, then theſe things will follow.

1. We have reaſon to ſuſpect that our ways upon this account may not be acceptable unto God, when we find that we do not ſtand approved to men, eſpecially to good men.

2. 'Tis a prepoſterous courſe to ſeek the approbation of men by any ſuch way, as will render us unacceptable to God; theſe two being linked together, both in their own natures, and by particular promiſes. 'Tis true, a man may get into the favour of a Party, by appearing vehement and zealous in ſome particular conteſt, but this will render him leſs approved to other good men, leſs uſeful in his generation, and conſequently leſs acceptable to God.

3. 'Tis a vain thing to expect any peace and ſettlement amongſt men, till they come to be more concerned for thoſe great things of Religion, than for others of leſſer moment. There may be a change of Forms and Parties, and

and the external ſtate of things, but their minds will ſtill abide at the ſame diſtance, till they come to be united in theſe great things of *righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* 'Tis not the pouring of a liquor from one veſſel to another that takes off its ſourneſs and acrimony, without ſuch a mixture as may enter into it, and alter the nature of it. If men would make this to be their great deſign and buſineſs, to ſtrive who ſhould be moſt righteous, and peaceable, and patient, other contentions amongſt them would quickly vaniſh.

4. A man may inſiſt ſo much in the vindication of ſome truths and duties, as thereby to bring a prejudice upon Religion. He may do the Devils work by his endeavous to promote ſuch things as are in themſelves right and true. I mean ſuch conteſts as concern points of the ſame or the like nature with thoſe of *meats* and *drinks* in the Text.

But what then may ſome ſay, ſhould we be of no opinion in ſuch things? Muſt we all turn *Scepticks*, and be indifferent to every thing, as if there could be no certainty?

I anſwer, By no means, nothing leſs; every man ſhould endeavour to have a full perſuaſion in his own mind concerning the things in difference: And when he doth well underſtand them, he ſhould be ready to aſſert and maintain them, as occaſion may be offered, and ſo far as the nature of the things will bear.

Only herein lies the great difficulty, which will require much Chriſtian prudence and conſideration to the ſtating of it, namely, how to proportion our zeal aright, in reference to ſeveral truths, which I ſhall particularly ſpeak to in the next *Uſe*.

II. *Uſe* of *Exhortation.*

1. To be cautious and conſiderate in the right managing of our differences about theſe leſſer things. There was never any Age, wherein conteſts of this nature have not been in faſhion; tho perhaps never ſo much as in ours. And therefore it will the more concern us to regulate our proſecutions and demeanour about them. In order to which theſe *two* things are to be well weighed and conſidered, namely, the *Evidence* and *Importance* of the things in queſtion.

1. For

1. For their *Evidence*: Every truth, whether *natural* or *revealed*, is not alike evident; ſome are more obſcure and doubtful than others. And becauſe the evidence of things is the ground and formal reaſon of our aſſent to them, therefore 'tis our duty to proportion the degrees of our aſſent, to thoſe of our evidence. Not to be doubtful in things that are clear, not to be confident in things that are doubtful; but with an equal diſpoſition of mind, to ſubmit to every thing according to its clearneſs and perſpicuity: In oppoſition to this there are *two* extreams, which are exceedingly prejudicial to Religion (eſpecially in times when controverſies and diſputes about it do ſo much abound) namely, *Scepticalneſs*, and *Dogmaticalneſs*.

1. By *Septicalneſs*, I mean, a willingneſs and inclination of mind, rather to comply with doubts and objections, than with proofs and evidences; an aptneſs to pick quarrels with every thing, though never ſo manifeſt, as if we were not willing that any thing ſhould be certain and eſtabliſhed. Beſides the inſolence and pride which is the ground of this diſpoſition, there

is likewiſe much of folly and contradiction in it, whereby ſuch men do become obnoxious unto that other extream of *Dogmaticalneſs*, which they affect moſt to avoid. For to look upon every thing as doubtful, is to deny the clear evidence of ſome things; and 'tis as well *dogmaticalneſs* to deny clear evidence where it is, as to aſſert it where it is not.

2. By *Dogmaticalneſs*, I mean, a readineſs to be over confident of the things we are well inclined to; an aptneſs to own every thing for equally true and certain, which is profeſſed by that Company or Party of men, amongſt whom our names are liſted; when a man receives a whole *Syſtem* of doctrine by the bulk, as if every thing in it were undoubtedly true, and alike evident, without a particular enquiry into the grounds and reaſons of things. An unwillingneſs to liſten unto any objection, which may ſeem to make againſt them, or to ſhake their certainty. This is a blameable partiality on the other hand; and hath in it the like inconſiſtency and contradiction with the other extream. Such Perſons hereby

hereby expoſing the moſt clear and manifeſt truths to the ſuſpicion of error, by putting more obſcure and doubtful matters in the ſame rank with them.

2. The *Second* thing to be conſidered, is the *Importance* of the matters in queſtion. As every truth is not of the ſame evidence, ſo neither is it of the ſame neceſſity. But there are in this reſpect likewiſe ſeveral degrees amongſt them: Some things are eſſential to Religion, belonging to the foundation, and are therefore neceſſary to the very being of a Chriſtian. As *Righteouſneſs* in the Text, that is, *faith*, and *holineſs*, and *juſtice*, or as it is elſewhere expreſſed, *faith which worketh by love*: Other things are only ſuperſtructions, and belong only to the well being of a Chriſtian, amongſt which ſome are as *gold*, *and ſilver*, *and precious ſtones*, things of the greateſt value amongſt men, next to life and being; others are of a lighter conſequence, and more remote from the foundation. Now herein much Chriſtian prudence will be required to diſtinguiſh aright, concerning the importance of ſeveral truths and duties, and accordingly to pro-

proportion our zeal for them, and our contention about them.

Not by our remiſneſs to bring down *foundation* Truths to the ſame rate with *ſuperſtructions*; nor by our forwardneſs on the other hand, to raiſe up *ſuperſtructions* unto the ſame value with *fundamentals*; which are the two extreams referring to the importance of the things, by which truth it ſelf will be very much prejudiced.

1. Too great careleſneſs and coldneſs about neceſſary truths, a kind of indifferency about all matters of Religion, as if they were all alike, and did ſo far only oblige, as the Civil Laws of ſeveral Countries did inforce them. I cannot ſay of this extream, that it doth encreaſe Controverſies in Religion; but it doth that which is much worſe, it takes away the ſubject of the queſtion, I mean Religion it ſelf.

2. On the other ſide, a man may lay too great a weight on ſome things, which are truths and duties. And there is nothing more ordinary than for good men, when they are once well perſuaded of ſome particular opinion, to think they do God good ſervice,

vice, by profecuting it with their utmoſt zeal, or by laying greater weight upon it than the nature of the thing requires, or will admit. But this muſt needs be of very dangerous conſequence: For if this courſe be admitted, where ſhall it end? Why may not falſhood be obtruded upon us on the ſame account? If we once tranſgreſs thoſe bounds which are fixed by the nature of things in reſpect of their evidence and importance, there can be no ſecurity againſt the wildeſt errors in the world.

Theſe *two* things that I have mentioned, being ſoberly conſidered and impartially applied to ſome of our late and preſent controverſies, would very much conduce to healing of the minds of men, and taking them off from many of thoſe contentions and animoſities which now abound.

2. We ſhould hence be perſuaded to lay out our ſelves with our utmoſt zeal and intention of mind upon thoſe great things of *righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* It were eaſy to mention abundance of Arguments, to excite and quicken men to a fervency about theſe things, would the time

time permit it. I ſhall very briefly ſum up what remains under theſe two heads, the *Excellency* and *Seaſonableneſs* of theſe things.

1. From their *Excellency:* There are but two kind of things that any men aim at or endeavour after, to get into the favour of *Men*, and of *God*, to be ſafe here, and happy hereafter. Why now theſe things do intitle us to both, they make us *to be accepted of God, and approved of men.* They are not only duties, but privileges, the chief part of that ſalvation and glory which we are capable of on this ſide of Heaven. That which makes men zealous in other points, is their apprehenſion of the importance and clearneſs of the things they inſiſt upon: Why, there can be nothing of greater importance than theſe things, wherein the power and ſubſtance of Religion doth conſiſt. And as for their evidence, let it be ſuppoſed that in ſome of the controverſies now on foot amongſt us, there ſhould in ſome ſolemn Aſſembly be an appeal made to heaven, to determine which of the Parties were in the right: If upon ſuch an appeal, an Angel ſhould immediately be ſent down,

or

or men ſhould riſe from the dead, and declare that ſuch a Way and Party were in the right, and the others miſtaken; one would think that upon ſuch an advantage, men might have good ground to be zealous and confident. Why we have more reaſon to be zealous for *righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, than men would have upon ſuch a miraculous confirmation of their Opinions: Becauſe theſe things are of the higheſt importance, and we have for them the ſame, if not better evidence. And the reaſon is this: By the ſame natural light which convinces a man that God alone is Omnipotent, and can only do miracles; that he is infinitely good, and will not perform any miracle in confirmation of a ſin or an error: By the ſame light it is that we are convinced of moral duties. But now we cannot have the like degree of evidence, that this or that particular action is a miracle, (becauſe of the obſcurity of natural cauſes) as we may that holineſs, and righteouſneſs, and peaceableneſs, are duties, and of a natural goodneſs and obligation. We are in the frame of our natures better fitted and pre-

prepared to underſtand *morals*, , than *naturals*; what is honeſt, rather than what is poſſible; and 'tis great reaſon we ſhould be ſo, becauſe we are more concerned in the one than the other. So that 'tis not poſſible there ſhould be any better evidence than what we have for the goodneſs and obligation of theſe things.

2. From the *Seaſonableneſs* of theſe things, both in reſpect of, 1. What we have ſeen in the Times *lately paſt*. And 2. What we are in expectation of for the *future*.

1. For the *time paſt*: No man can be ignorant of thoſe horrid ſcandals that have been brought upon Religion by the neglect of theſe moral duties, under the higheſt pretences of zeal to other matters. Whereby ſome men have been induced to deſpiſe all profeſſion of Religion, as being but mere pretence and deſign, as if there were nothing in it of reality. Now if we have in us any tenderneſs for the honour of Religion, if we would make up that breach, and wipe off that blemiſh that hath in this reſpect been brought upon it, it muſt be by our integrity and zeal for the promoting of theſe more

more ſubſtantial matters, both in our ſelves and others. 'Tis true men have been always apt to reſt themſelves in moral performances, as if they alone were ſufficient to entitle us to heaven; and conſequently as the endeavour to drive them off from ſuch preſumptions as theſe, can never be unſeaſonable, ſo on the other hand when men ſhall out of pretence to ſome higher notions and attainments, dare to neglect and violate theſe moral duties, 'tis then, if ever, ſeaſonable to inſiſt upon the neceſſity and importance of them.

2. In reference to that ſettlement and peace which we are now in expectation of, to which theſe things will moſt effectually conduce. It muſt be granted, that 'tis beyond humane contrivance to find out any infallible way of ſecuring future events; nor is it conſiſtent with the nature of humane affairs, which are often ſwayed by ſuch intricate providences, as we are not able to foreſee or comprehend the reaſon of; God ſometimes making uſe of ſuch men, who are moſt vehement againſt a thing, to be the chief inſtruments of promoting it; and thoſe who

who are moſt for it, to be the occaſions of hindering it.

So that I ſay, in this reſpect there is a neceſſity that we ſhould acquieſce in ſuch fair probabilities, as the prudence of men can contrive, and the ſtate of things will admit. He that hath obſerved thoſe various providences, which theſe poor diſtracted Nations have of late years been exerciſed with, cannot but take notice, that ſince our firſt civil Tempeſts and Storms, there have been ſome ſeaſons wherein we have ſeemed to be near the Harbour, and upon the borders of ſettlement: And yet in the midſt of all our hopes, there hath ſtill been ſome unexpected emergency, whereby we have been driven back again into the wide Ocean, and expoſed to all our former fears and dangers. What may be the iſſue of our preſent expectations, no man can be certain of. Only of this we may be moſt ſure, that this laying out our ſelves upon the duties of *righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghoſt*, will be the beſt ſecurity for every man in his private capacity, and the moſt effectual remedy for the publick.

It cannot be but that in times of change

change and revolution, mens minds muſt be variouſly exerciſed with hopes and fears, according as their ſeveral intereſts do engage them. The *great thoughts of heart* upon ſome men are, how they may be ſecured in the change of times: But now if men would repoſe themſelves upon Scripture-ſecurity, I would refer them to that place, *Rom.* 13. 3. *Wilt thou not then be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame.* This being the very natural end of Magiſtracy, *namely, the praiſe of them that do well*, 1 Pet. 2. 14.

I ſhall ſhut up all with that ſaying of the *Apoſtle*, 1 Pet. 3. 10. cited out of the 34 Pſal. *What man is he that would ſee good days? Let him eſchew evil and do good, let him ſeek peace and enſue it.* He may be moſt certain by this means to be entit'led unto the *protection of God: For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers:* And *ſafety* from *men*; *For who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?*

The End of the Third Sermon.

The Fourth Sermon.

Titus II. 10.

That they may adorn [illegible]*td doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

ST. *Paul* having by his Preaching laid the foundation of a *Christian* Church in *Crete*, or *Candia*, and ot having leisure to reside amongst hem, for the farther building them p in their most holy faith, by reason f his employment in several other laces, to the care of which (as be- g the *Apostle* of the *Gentiles*) he was ngaged, he doth depute *Titus* in his ead.

And for his better encouragement nd direction in those ministerial nployments committed to him, he rites to him this *Epistle*, consisting esides the *preface* and *conclusion*) of so

many *parts* as there are *Chapters*, which are three.

Verſ. 5. The firſt being concerning the *ordaining of Elders or Biſhops*, with ſome animadverſions againſt ſuch as did trouble the peace of the Church.

The *ſecond* concerning thoſe *particular duties* that belong to the ſeveral orders and degrees of perſons in a *Family*.

The *third* concerning the *common duties* of *Chriſtians* in general.

The Text is under the *Second* of theſe Heads, wherein *Titus* is inſtructed in that ſound doctrine (as 'tis ſtiled, *v.* 1.) whereunto he was to exhort ſeveral Ages, Sexes and Orders of perſons in an *œconomical* relation.

Aged men have their leſſon, *v.* 2.

Aged Women, *v.* 3. *Young Women* *v.* 4, 5.

Young men, and more particularly *Titus* himſelf, as being under that rank: *v.* 6, 7, 8. *Servants*, *v.* 9, 10.

All which Exhortations are enforced by ſeveral reaſons from the 11 *v.* to the end of the *Chapter*.

That which *Servants* are exhorted to, is a ſubmiſſive *gentleneſs and fidelity* to be *obedient unto their own Maſters*:

to pleaſe them well in all things, not anſwering again, not purloining, but ſhewing all good fidelity: Which exhortation is further preſſed upon them by a particular reaſon, taken from that common duty incumbent upon all believers, to bring a reputation upon the Religion which they did profeſs, in the words of the *Text*, *That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

That's the connexion and ſcope of the *Text.* There are four *Terms* which may ſeem to need explication. What is meant by, *They adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

1. The *Subjects* of this exhortation, in the word *they*, that is, *Servants*, *v.* 9. By which word is not only meant ſuch kind of Servants as are now in uſe amongſt us, *Conductitii, hired Servants*, who in other reſpects are Freemen, and can let themſelves out to ſervice upon ſuch kind of conditions, and for ſuch a time as they ſhall agree upon: But it comprehends likewiſe *Mancipia, Slaves*, ſuch as are bought and ſold in the Market, and reckoned amongſt mens goods and chattels. For ſuch were many of the Servants in the Pri-

mitive times. Now becauſe thoſe that are in a ſervile condition are naturally of a more illiberal, rugged and diſingenuous temper, the *Apoſtle* would have ſuch Servants as are converted, to manifeſt a change upon themſelves in this reſpect, becoming more mild and gentle in their carriage, whereby they ſhould remove that prejudice and ſcandal that was brought upon Religion by others: As if the privilege of their being made free by Chriſt, and having him for their Maſter, might authorize them to be more ſtubborn and inſolent towards their civil relations, and not to remain any longer under the yoke of humane ſervitude. It would bring a reputation upon the doctrine of the Goſpel which they profeſſed, when others ſhould by experience find it ſo powerful upon them, as to render thoſe who are in the hardeſt condition of ſervitude, patient and ſubmiſſive under their yoke, truſty and faithful in their duties.

2. The next *term* to be enquired after is the *Act*, *Adorn*. The word is κοσμῶσιν, it ſignifies to ſet a thing off for its beſt advantage of comelineſs, that it may appear grateful and lovely to

to the beholders. It consists in two things, removal of blemishes, and addition of ornaments: Many things that are of an excellent beauty in their own native simplicities, may yet be capable of such superadditions as will contribute to their further ornament. Now men may then be said to adorn their profession, when they do studiously endeavour to avoid all such uncomely actions, as may bring a prejudice upon it, and to do such things as may make it appear most amiabe, and win over others to a love of it.

3. The *Object matter*, in that phrase, *The doctrine of God our Saviour*; whereby we are to understand the Gospel; which is therefore said to be the doctrine of Christ, because he is the chief Author and Object of it. It being the word of reconciliation by him. Now tho it be not in the power of any creature to add any thing unto the beauty of this doctrine, which is in it self *the wisdom of God in a mystery*, 2 Cor. 2. 7. The *glorious Gospel*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. *And the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, v. 6. *The riches of the glory of*

God, Colos. 1. 27. Which are some of the highest expressions of beauty that words can reach unto: And so this doctrine is not in it self capable of any real addition of beauty from us, no more than we can add light to the Sun; yet God is pleased to esteem and to accept of that as an ornament to it, when our *conversation is as becometh the Gospel of Christ*, as the phrase is *Philip.* 1. 27. When men walk suitably to those rules of goodness, and purity, and meekness, which are therein so often insisted upon.

4. As for that phrase, *All things*, it does refer not only to those duties of Religion and Worship which do more immediately concern our communion with himself; but likewise to the businesses of our conversing with others, to our managing of secular and worldly business; our very recreations and diversions should not be without a savour of Christianity. And we should, even in these things, give evidence of our faith, sobriety, and patience, and humility, and contentedness. And so likewise for the duties of our relations, even the meanest of them: That of Servants, who tho they be

be themſelves of the baſeſt and moſt contemptible condition, yet are in a capacity, according ro their ſphere, of bringing honour to their profeſſion, as well as thoſe that are moſt noble.

So much I conceive ſufficient for the explication of the words in the Text. Though the duty here mentioned do by its particular connexion in this place more immediately refer to thoſe that are in the relation of Servants, yet it is ſuppoſed to be of a more general extent, and to reach unto all other degrees and profeſſions, for whom the reaſons of it will hold *à fortiori.* For if thoſe of the meaneſt condition are not exempted from this endeavour, much more then ſhould others make it their care and buſineſs, who have greater advantages for it, and conſequently greater engagements to it. And according to this more general extent of this duty, I intend the proſecution of it.

The *Doctrine* I would inſiſt upon, is this:

It is the duty of every Chriſtian ſo to demean himſelf in every buſineſs, condition,

dition, relation, as may adorn the Goſpel, and win over others to a love of it.

There is a ſpecial care to be had to the comelineſs of our actions, that they be ſuch, and ſo managed, as to bring a reputation to the doctrine we profeſs, and make it ſeem lovely in the eyes of others.

I might cite abundance of proofs to this purpoſe. All thoſe admonitions in Scripture, 1. Of not giving offence to others. But 2. Rather winning them over by our good examples, are but other kind of expreſſions ſignifying the ſame thing with this in the *Text.*

Such are thoſe places which do prohibit the giving an occaſion for *the name of God and his doctrine to be blaſphemed*, Rom. 2. 24. 1 Tim. 6. 1. Or *cauſing the way of truth to be evil ſpoken of*, 2 Pet. 2. 2. Or *giving occaſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully*, 1 Tim. 5. 14. Signifying that ſpecial care and caution which we ought to uſe in vindicating the reputation of Religion. Men are full of prejudice againſt the ways of God, apt to entertain hard thoughts againſt them, as

if

if they were rough, deformed, and uneven, ready to catch at all occasions of confirming themselves in these prejudices, from the haltings and imprudences of those that profess Religion: And therefore it should be their endeavour to be very wary of giving any advantages of this kind. This was *Nehemiah's* argument, *c.* 5. *v.* 9. *Ought ye not to walk in the fear of God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?* And in this very *Chapter* of the *Text*, the *Apostle* exhorteth that their *behaviour be as becometh holiness*, v. 3. *that the word of God be not blasphemed*, v. 5. *that he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you*, v. 8. So again, 1 Pet. 2. 12. For this reason ought *your conversation to be honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they are apt to speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, be brought to glorify God in the day of visitation.* 1 Pet. 3. 16.

To this purpose likewise are all those other Scriptures, which do mention it as a duty to win over others by our good examples. To let *our light so shine before men, that others seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in heaven;* Mat. 5. 16.

Heb. 10. 24. *heaven*; *To consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works*, that is, so far to study the tempers, inclinations, interests, of those we converse with, that thereby we may be able to take the right advantage of doing good upon them. *If by any means we may provoke them to an honest emulation.* So *Philip.* 2. 15. *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, amongst whom* ye may *shine as lights in the world:* That you may be of as great usefulness and ornament in your several Spheres, as the lights in the firmament.

Rom. 11. 14.

So Womens conversations ought to be such, as *to win their Husbands*, &c. 1 *Pet.* 3. 1, 2.

I shall cite but one Text more for the *proof* of this, and then proceed to the *Reasons* of it. 'Tis that known place, *Philip.* 4. 8. *Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things.* Wherein the *Apostle* doth by

a pecu-

a peculiar ſtrain of *Rhetorick* inculcate upon the *Philippians*, in the moſt comprehenſive words, and the moſt ſerious vehement manner, all ſuch lovely and deſirable qualifications, as might ſerve to adorn their profeſſions.

Whatſoever things are true: That is, ſincere and real, free from all falſe pretences and appearances.

Whatſoever things are honeſt: The original word is σεμνὰ, which ſignifies properly *venerable*. That is, ſuch things as may occaſion in others a reverend eſteem of you.

Whatſoever things are juſt: That is, free from the ſuſpicion of unworthy partiality, or baſe ends, not ſo much aiming at ſerving the intereſt of a Party, as doing that which is in it ſelf right and juſt.

Whatſoever things are pure: ὅσα ἁγνὰ, That is, things that are free from all immodeſt uncomelineſs.

Whatſoever things are lovely: ὅσα προσφιλῆ, That is, grateful and benign, ſuch as will render a man moſt acceptable to thoſe with whom he converſes; free from that aſperity and ruggedneſs, which do's ſo deform ſome mens carriage.

What-

Whatsoever things are of good report : ὅσα εὔφημα. There are some things that by the consent of Nations are of a good fame, and well reputed of; the Apostle would have a special care taken of such matters, there being nothing of greater consequence to the interest of a Profession, than the good name of those that profess it.

If there be any virtue, ἀρετὴ. Which Word tho it be most frequent amongst the Philosophers, yet 'tis very seldom used in Scripture, and not any where by St. *Paul*, excepting this place, as being perhaps too low an expression for those spiritual Graces which Christians ought chiefly to labour after. But yet as for all those things that are commendable amongst the very Heathen, which they stile by the name of *Virtue*, Christians ought not to be defective in such things, or think it below them to imitate such examples.

If there be any praise; whatsoever is counted laudable and comely by the very light of nature, ought not to be neglected by them.

For

For the further confirmation of this Truth, I ſhall ſuggeſt three *Reaſons* to convince the equity of it.

1. This doctrine doth adorn us, and therefore 'tis but reaſon that we ſhould adorn it. We are all of us naturally in a deformed forlorn condition, being *wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked*; and 'tis alone this Doctrine of the Goſpel that doth furniſh us with *gold, and eye-ſalve, and white rayment* to enrich and beautify us. We are of our ſelves *children of darkneſs*, 'tis the Goſpel that doth *beget us again to a lively hope*, and make us *children of the light*; and therefore 'tis but reaſon that we ſhould *walk worthy of our vocation, and as becomes children of the light*, Epheſ. 5. 8. *Setting forth the virtues of him that called us into his marvelous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Light is one of the moſt glorious and beautiful creatures in the world, and therefore an earthly and ſordid carriage will not become that title. Thoſe that are raiſed to this privilege ſhould endeavour after ſuch virtues as will be ſuitable to it. Men are content in the night-time to be homely and plain, but in the day they will endeavour to have

Reaſon 1.

Rev. 3. 17.

have their garments decent and comely about them. So ſhould Chriſtians demean themſelves, remembring the obligation that lies upon them from their calling, counting it a greater ſhame to them to do any unworthy act, under the glorious light of the Goſpel about them, and the illumination of the ſpirit within them, than other men do to commit any filthineſs in the face of the Sun. Men uſually are very careful to advance the honour and reputation of that from which they receive their own. So that the Law of gratitude doth ingage us to this duty, which is the firſt reaſon.

Reaſon 2. 2. In the adorning of our profeſſions, we do really promote our own advantage, and adorn our ſelves, the reputation of that redounding to our benefit, and the blemiſhes of it to our diſparagement. The honour and eſteem that is given to any Profeſſion does reflect upon the Profeſſors; men are uſually very ſenſible in things of their own intereſt; how careful will they be in adorning their Habitations, not grudging to beſtow much labour and coſt to this purpoſe, and for their Bodies nothing more common than vanities

vanities and excefs in the adorning of thefe; and yet after all their care and delicacy in this kind, thefe bodies of theirs are but frail earthly Tabernacles, and muft fhortly prove worms-meat, and molder away into their original duft: And fo likewife for their Names; all thofe difficulties that men undergo in the purfuit of fame and glory, which is the bufinefs of men of more large and generous fpirits, is but for the adorning of their names, and perpetuating them to pofterity, which tho it have its proper ufe and bounds, yet is it but vanity, as *Solomon* fays, *feeing that which now is, in the days to come fhall be forgotten*, *Eccleſ.* 2. 16. Every generation producing fomething which feems new and ftrange, to take up mens talk and wonder, and to drown the memory of former perfons and actions.

Now if we would do any thing of this kind which may be for our real advantage, it muft be by the adorning of this Doctrine, which abideth for ever. The fweet ornament of a good name, which we endeavour to pour upon the head of that, will run down and be communicated to the skirts

about it, all that belong unto it. There are but two kind of things that may juſtly challenge any care from us of this nature; ſome things ought to be adorned for their own worth and dignity, other things for that ſpecial affection we bear to them, and the deſire of having them loved and eſteemed by others; in both which reſpects this doctrine of the Goſpel ought to be preferred before any thing elſe, eſpecially ſince our own advantage is ſo much concerned in it. That is a ſecond Reaſon, the Law of ſelf-love doth ingage it.

Reaſon 3. 3. And *laſtly*, which may ſerve inſtead of all other Reaſons, this is the great end of our Creation and Being, the chief buſineſs upon which we were ſent into the world, to glorify God, and bring honour to his name: Which we then do in reference to others, when we demean our ſelves ſo as to cauſe them to acknowledge and ſpeak well of him. This is *to walk worthy of the Lord*, 1 Theſ. 2. 12. and *as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt*, *Philip.* 1. 27. When thoſe that on themſelves are apt *to ſpeak evil* of our Profeſſion, *ſhall by our good converſation* be

be convinced and won over to a love of it. This is the greateſt and moſt noble work that any man is capable of contributing unto; And therefore that may be another Reaſon to enforce the neceſſity of it, 'tis the chief end of our Creation.

I ſhall need to ſay no more by way of *Explication* or Proof: I come now to the *Application* of this Point, wherein it may be improved to theſe *Uſes*.

I. For *Information*, if it be every ones duty to take ſpecial care of adorning his profeſſion, then it will follow:

1. That men are not only to regard the lawfulneſs of their actions as to the matter, but the comelineſs of them too as to the manner and degree. As there is difference betwixt clothing and ornaments, ſo is there betwixt the mere lawfulneſs of actions, and the comelineſs of them. A Chriſtian ſhould even in moral duties do ſomething beyond the common level of men, aiming at things that are more generous and heroical, and may give a luſtre to his profeſſion; eſpecially in ſuch matters, as border neareſt to the

proper Graces of Chriſtianity, as *gratitude, patience, meekneſs, ſelf-denial.* And in ſuch caſes where other ordinary men may be ſuppoſed to yield unto common infirmity and temptation, the uſual excuſe of their failings; he ſhould preſs on with greater vigor, as conſidering the cauſe that depends upon him, the reputation of his holy Profeſſion. Some things, that for the ſubſtance of them may be juſt; yet being performed without reſpect to this end, may prove blame-worthy. *Bonum* muſt be *ex cauſa integra:* The defect of any ſuch circumſtance whereby an action might be better performed, doth lay a blemiſh upon it. Now we are *to provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men*; to acquit and *commend our ſelves not only to our own conſciences*, but to *other mens* conſciences too, 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. This doth principally conſiſt in the right circumſtantiating of actions, and will require much prudence to judge what is ſeaſonable and fit.

2. Hence it will follow, that amongſt that great variety of duties, which are incumbent upon a Chriſtian, there ought to be a ſpecial regard unto ſuch as are of general approbation, and moſt

moſt ſutable to the reaſon of mankind: that is, to thoſe moral duties which the light of Nature doth oblige unto, becauſe *thoſe who are without*, will be apt to take an eſtimate of us by our conformity to theſe. And that man will never arrive to the eſteem of being Religious, who ſhould be found negligent and defective in this kind, either in reſpect of an holy awe and fear towards the divine Majeſty, which he doth profeſs to adore; juſtice, equity, charity, gentleneſs in his dealing and converſing with others; theſe things being of an univerſal approbation amongſt men that pretend to any Religion. For tho natural men are apt to entertain prejudices and hard thoughts againſt many religious duties, yet there are ſome things that are both *acceptable of God*, and *approved of men*, *Rom.* 14. 18. And that is, when Religion is not ſo much put in *meats* and *drinks*, and external forms, as in *righteouſneſs and peace*. &c. 'Tis true indeed, a man muſt take heed of reſting in theſe moral attainments; but on the other ſide he muſt take heed of coming ſhort of them too. He that pretends to grace, and doth not come

up to these, is in as bad, and (in many respects) a much worse condition, than he that rests in them. 'Tis true likewise, that there may be much danger in seeking to please men, but yet this is an end which we may and should propose to our selves even in our religious conversation, *Rom.* 15. 2. *Let every one please his neighbour*: 'tis the *Apostles* advice there; and he owns it for his practice, 2 *Cor.* 10. 33. *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.* There must and will always be an enmity betwixt *the seed of the Woman* and *the seed of the Serpent*; but yet this doth not hinder but that we may labour for so much favour in their eyes as may give us advantage of doing good upon them. 'Tis said of the *Apostles*, that they *had favour with all the people*, Act. 2. 47. And upon that account were they so powerful amongst them. Some of these things would not perhaps be so proper to be insisted on, did not the condition of the times make them seasonable; when so many men under the profession of Religion (which is now in fashion, and therefore easy)

do

do indulge themſelves in the neglect of moral duties. As if the pretences to holineſs, which do really ſo much the more ingage to theſe things, might yet ſerve as a diſpenſation from them; than which nothing can be more uncomely.

2. But I haſten to a ſecond *Uſe*, for *Reproof* of ſuch perſons who are ſo far from being Ornaments, that they are rather ſpots and blemiſhes to the Doctrine of the Goſpel. Such are of two kinds, *Careleſs* and *Scandalous* Profeſſors.

I. For thoſe that are *Careleſs* and Barren, who are wholly immerſed in themſelves, and the obſervance of their own humours, without any regard to the profiting or pleaſing of others. There is ſomething in mens religious converſation, anſwerable to the ſlovenlineſs of their outward carriage, whereby others are made averſe, and as it were nauſeated from converſing with them. Such are all ſelfiſh, moroſe, churliſh, contentious men, who inſtead of inviting others, do rather diſcourage them from the ways of Religion.

II. For such as are *scandalous*, who whilst they profess Religion, do allow themselves in some notorious sins: And sometimes commit them under the very pretence of Religion; as the Pharisees are accused to *devour widows houses*, that is, to do acts of injustice and cruelty, under the pretence of devotion and zeal: Both these are an abomination, but especially the latter, which doth involve in it the highest affront and indignity against Religion, that can be. It is really to scoff and despise that, to which in appearance we pretend the highest reverence. It is to carry Christ about in scorn, to be derided by others, crying *hail King of the Jews*, and yet *spitting upon him, and buffeting him.* Such persons are so far from adorning their profession, that they do their utmost to disparage it, and make it appear odious. What serious man would be invited to own that for a Religion, which is professed by men of such false and hateful conversations? There are *two* things I would briefly suggest by way of motive to dissuade men from offending in either of these kinds, *viz.* the *unworthiness*, and the *Danger* of such carriage.

1. 'Tis

1. 'Tis *Unworthy* and odious to caſt a blemiſh and reproach upon that to which we owe our own honour; to deſtroy thoſe whom we are bound to love and help. The Scripture puts it as a brand upon the looſe Sons of *Eli*, *Hophni* and *Phinehas*, 1 Sam. 2. 17. That *they cauſed men to abhor the offerings of the Lord.* And nothing can be more hateful than to bring ſacred things into contempt: It was *Jacob*'s complaint againſt his Sons, *Simeon* and *Levi*, Gen. 34. 30. That *they had made him to ſtink amongſt the inhabitants of the Land.* So doth the unworthy carriage of Profeſſors, cauſe the hearts of others to riſe up againſt them with much ſcorn and deteſtation.

2. And as it is unworthy, ſo likewiſe is it *dangerous*; you know the ſeveral *Woes* in Scripture denounced and executed againſt thoſe that give offence. *Temporal* judgments upon their names, *Malach.* 2. 9. The Prieſts that cauſed others to ſtumble at the Law, are threatened to be made contemptible and baſe before all the people. And there is nothing more equal, than that thoſe who expoſe Religion to contempt, ſhould ſuffer under it themſelves.

Judg-

Judgments in reſpect of life: *Balaam* was for this reaſon ſlain with the ſword, *becauſe he taught* Balac *to lay a ſtumbling block before the children of Iſrael*, Numb. 31. 8. The Sons of *Eli* were upon the like account ſlain by the *Philiſtines*, 1 Sam. 4. 11.

But that's not all: For beſides this temporal death, it doth expoſe a man likewiſe to *Eternal* death. And 'tis but reaſon that it ſhould be ſo, becauſe the ſins of ſuch offenders do extend to the ruine of the ſouls of others; they doing what in them lies *to deſtroy thoſe for whom Chriſt dyed*, 1 Cor. 8. 11. 'Tis ſpoken concerning the abuſe of our liberty in things indifferent, 'tis much more concerning actions in themſelves ſinful.

That's a known *Text*, *Matth.* 18. 6. *It were better for a man to have a milſtone hung about his neck, and to be caſt into the Sea, than to offend one of theſe little ones.* Now if to offend but one, and that a little one, that is, one that is weak in knowledge and faith, will expoſe a man to a certain and dreadful vengeance, what then may they expect, who in regard of the eminence of their place, reputation, profeſſion, do

do occaſion a more general and ſpreading ſcandal, both in reſpect of the number and quality of the perſons offended, and cauſe the ways of God to be commonly evil ſpoken of? As if the profeſſion of Religion, were but a deſign to bring about ſome politick ends, and as if all men who did pretend to holineſs, were to be ſuſpected as deceivers; if thoſe that brought up an evil report upon the Land of promiſe, were ſo ſeverely puniſhed, being deſtroyed by a plague from heaven; Certainly then, the offence and the puniſhment ought to be eſtimated to be as much greater here, as this heavenly *Canaan* is better than that earthly. *Numb.* 14. 37.

3. I have but one *Uſe* more, and that ſhall be for *Exhortation*, to perſuade us unto the ſtudy of this duty in the *Text*. That we would every one in our ſeveral places, endeavour to bring honour to our profeſſion, and to vindicate it from thoſe reproaches, to which the unworthy converſation of ſome profeſſors hath expoſed it. I know not any duty more ſeaſonable to be preſſed than this, becauſe of thoſe ſo great and common ſcandals that have been given in our Time;

Wherein

Wherein too many have juſtified all thoſe old Calumnies and Reproaches, which the malice of the ancient *Heathen* was wont to charge upon the primitive Chriſtians.

For our better direction in the performance of this dury, you may pleaſe to remember what was ſuggeſted before. That the nature of *adorning* doth conſiſt in theſe two things: The removal of *Blemiſhes*, and the addition of *Ornaments*.

1. For the Removal of *Blemiſhes*: There are ſeveral things which are after a more eſpecial manner blemiſhes to the converſation of a Chriſtian. Beſides thoſe groſſer vices, which are moſt oppoſite to the purity of Evangelical doctrine, by which this profeſſion ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from all others: I ſay beſides theſe, there are ſome actions likewiſe, which ſeeming not to contain in them any groſs iniquity or injuſtice, are thereupon more eaſily fallen into. And yet being deſtructive to peace and friendſhip amongſt men, and againſt the good of humane Society, and conſequently hateful to the generality of mankind, and therefore very great blemiſhes to the profeſſion of

of Religion. Such are *ſuſpitiouſneſs*, *evil ſurmiſings*, *tale-bearers*, which are the *fewel to contention*, as the *Wiſeman* ſpeaks, *Prov.* 26. 20. *Malignity*, that is, an aptneſs to put the worſt conſtruction upon things; *whiſpering*, *backbiting*, *raſh cenſuring* of others; which things in the opinion of St. *James* are not conſiſtent with the very ſhew or profeſſion of Religion. *If any man amongſt you ſeemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that mans religion is vain*, Jam. 1. 26. Being *buſy bodies*, under the pretence of zeal and religion, in the affairs of others, wherein we are not concerned, which is very apt to provoke men unto much indignation and prejudice.

And then beſides theſe blemiſhes, which concern our civil converſation with others, there are ſome likewiſe which men are ſubject unto in the performance of their Religious duties. An imprudent openneſs, and too much affectation in them, as if we did them to be ſeen of men. A being ſtrict in leſſer things, and looſe in greater, which is *to walk circumſpectly, as fools not as wiſe*, and hath uſually much provocation in it. There are ſeveral other things

things of this nature, which I cannot ſtand to enumerate; but theſe are ſome of thoſe particular failings, to which thoſe who would be thought the more ſtrict profeſſors are ſubject, which ought to be avoided, as being after a more eſpecial manner blemiſhes to our Profeſſion.

2. There are ſome peculiar Virtues and Graces, which are commended to us, as being more eſpecial ornaments to our Profeſſion.

1 Pet. 3. 15 1. Nothing doth become men more than a holy reverence and fear in ſpeaking of the things of God. There is an uncomelineſs, and there may be a ſuperſtition too, in the unſeaſonable mixing of ſacred things with mirth.

2. In reference to *others*, nothing is of a more univerſal approbation, than *Love* and *Juſtice*.

1. For *Love*, there muſt be a *philanthropia*, extending to the good of mankind and publick benefit; not confining our deſigns within the narrow compaſs of our own private advantage, and the obſervance of our ſelves: And there muſt be a *philadelphia* too, a more eſpecial love to the brethren, and readineſs to ſerve and help them, eſpecially for

for ſuch as are in diſtreſs, and in a ſtate of affliction. The works of mercy to ſuch are not only ſweet odors in the ſight of God, but before men.

2. And ſo for *Juſtice* likewiſe: Uprightneſs and ſingle-heartedneſs, a freedom from guile and deſigns, being commendable amongſt all profeſſions of men. And therefore the neglect or want of theſe muſt needs be a great blemiſh amongſt Chriſtians. When thoſe that are profeſſors ſhall be more ready to ſerve the intereſt of a Party, than to obſerve the rules of juſtice and equity; this muſt needs occaſion hard thoughts and ſpeeches againſt them.

3. In regard of *our ſelves*; the holy Ghoſt doth frequently commend to us, *humility*, *meekneſs*, *modeſty*, as being the moſt comely ornaments, and indeed the very badge and livery of our Profeſſion. We are exhorted to be *clothed with humility*, reſembling it to a garment, with which we are to deck our ſelves; and *a meek and quiet ſpirit* is expreſly compared unto, and preferred before the *adorning with gold and apparrel*; and as thoſe are uſually valued by men, ſo this is ſaid to be *in the ſight of God of great price*, 1 Pet. 3. 4. And the

the Scripture ſtyles modeſt behaviour, *neat*, 1 Tim. 3. 2. κοσμιος. That's the Word, we tranſlate it, *of good behaviour*, but 'tis the ſame with this in the Text, and ſignifies properly *neat* or *comely*.

Nothing is more frequently inculcated in the Goſpel, than theſe kind of graces, that we ſhould be *gentle, eaſie to be intreated*, favourable towards the infirmities of others, putting the beſt conſtruction upon things; Being *ſoft* in our anſwers, *ſlow to anger, ready to forgive, overcoming evil with good, ſpeaking evil of no man, being no brawlers, but gentle, ſhewing all meekneſs to all men*, Titus 3. 2.

Theſe graces are all of them of ſuch a lovely and winning nature, that it would exceedingly promote the intereſt of Religion if they did more ſhine forth in the lives of thoſe who call themſelves Profeſſors in theſe times.

'Tis true, theſe Graces do more naturally ariſe from a condition of trouble and ſuffering, as the primitive times were. And in ſuch days as theſe, when the profeſſion of Religion is in fa hion, and advantageous to a mans ſecular ends, and the Church in a kind

of

of triumphant condition, many of thoſe who profeſs Religion (if they are not otherwiſe perſons of judgment and ſolid worth) are more apt to grow inſolent, and rugged towards others. But yet theſe Graces would be no leſs comely now, than they were then. Nay the greater the difficulty of them is, the greater would their ornament be. And therefore the more watchful ought we to be, in reſpect of the temptations againſt them.

I know there are ſeveral other things which ſome men make choice of for the ornaments of Religion, as skill in ſome affected inſignificant Phraſes, or ſome high airy notions, zeal for ſome particular forms, or in ſerving the intereſt of a Party. Nothing is more obvious to any ones obſervation, than that many men do principally inſiſt upon ſome ſuch things as theſe, for the great ornaments of their profeſſion, by which they meaſure themſelves and others.

Whereas ſome of theſe things are ſo far from being *ornaments*, that they are at the beſt but *ſpots* and *blemiſhes*, and the beſt of them are but *faſhions*, which though they may ſeem

comely in ſome particular place and ſeaſons, yet they have not any abſolute beauty in them, and at another time will appear deformed. Whereas theſe other things I have mentioned, will never be out of faſhion, as having in them an abſolute beauty of their own, not depending upon places, times, or opinion.

The End of the Fourth Sermon.

The

The Fifth Sermon.

At a *Viſitation* holden at *London*.

TITUS II. 15.

Theſe things ſpeak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority: LET NO MAN DESPISE THEE.

THeſe words do contain one of the Apoſtolical Rules or Canons, whereby Church-officers are directed to preſerve the dignity of their places, and the authority of their miniſtry, and therefore cannot be unſeaſonable for the preſent occaſion and ſolemnity.

In the beginning of this *Chapter* the Apoſtle had mentioned that *ſound Doctrine* which he would have *Titus*

in his preaching to insist upon, with reference to several ages, sexes, and conditions of persons, to *verse* 11.

After which he proceeds to a brief recapitulation of these more *general* duties wherein all men are concerned, of *Sobriety*, *Righteousness*, and *Godliness*: And takes notice of those new peculiar reasons, whereby the Gospel doth oblige men to a strict observance of these moral duties, *namely*: 1. From that great reward which it doth more clearly propose, *The blessed hope, and that glorious appearing of the great God*, v. 13. 2. From the assistance which it gives to us, by *redeeming us from our Iniquities*, v. 14. Abolishing the *guilt*, and subduing the *power* of sin; which ought to be very powerful motives, whereby Christians should be excited to become *a peculiar people*, separate from the rest of the world, *zealous of good works*; striving by their fervency, and diligence, and chearfulness, as much to excel others in their *obedience*, as they do in the *privileges*.

Having mentioned these great fundamental duties, he thereupon subjoyns this exhortation, *these things speak, and exhort and rebuke with all authority.* *These*

These things, i. e. especially these more substantial and weighty matters, wherein the essence of Religion doth consist, in opposition to other smaller points of less evidence or consequence.

These things speak: Be ready to instruct such as are ignorant in these duties; *and exhort* them to a careful observance of them. And if any man be so contumacious, notwithstanding this instruction and exhortation, as to violate these known duties, let him be *rebuked with all authority*. Do not deal with such an one in a precarious way, but with such a courage and majesty, as may become him who hath power in the name of God to command others to observe their duties. The messengers of God should not fear the faces of men; such kind of matters, as *these*, are of that evidence and importance, as may well bear a man out, to speak with authority, and to strike an awe upon the hearts of such as shall gainsay and oppose them.

And in order to this, that such rebukes may be of authority, and the more effectual; the Apostle adviseth to take special care, that *no man despise him*.

Not as if it were in our power what others ſhall think of us. For as *honor eſt in honorante*, ſo is contempt likewiſe: Men will take the liberty of judging as they pleaſe; they may through ignorance, or malice, or envy, have mean thoughts of thoſe that are moſt worthy; but though the *form* of honour be not in our power, yet the *matter* of it is, namely virtuous and worthy actions. And we may *deſerve* the eſteem of others, though they ſhould be ſo unjuſt as deny it to us.

So that the meaning of this exhortation of *not letting others deſpiſe us*, muſt be, ſo far as in us lies, we muſt be careful not to do any thing which may give occaſion to others to have mean and deſpicable thoughts of us. That man's exhortations and rebukes muſt needs be altogether vain and inſignificant, who by any unworthy actions hath rendered himſelf contemptible: Whereas, if by well-doing we approve our ſelves to the conſciences of others, it cannot be but that we ſhall have authority with them. Men muſt and will ſtand in awe of us, when we demean our ſelves ſo as they may have reaſon to believe that

when

when we are angry, God is displeased with them.

I shall prosecute my discourse upon this Text, with all imaginable plainness, under these *three* heads.

1. I shall endeavour to shew what *despising* is, and wherein it consists.

2. Of what great consequence it is, that Ministers should preserve themselves from contempt.

3. The means how this may be done.

And then conclude all with some brief application.

I. Concerning the nature of *despising*, what it is, and wherein it consists: It signifies briefly, cheap and low thoughts of a person, together with a suitable demeanour towards him.

The most proper object of it, is *littleness* and impotence. Whatever we apprehend to be of any kind of power, we have a suitable regard to it. If it be of a hurtful nature, we hate and fear, and take care to avoid it: But as for such things as are little and impotent, not able to do either good or hurt, we are not any further concerned for them, but barely to despise and contemn them.

'Tis properly oppoſed to *honouring*; both of them being originally acts of the underſtanding, in paſſing judgment upon the nature of things.

When we do in our minds own or acknowledge the real worth or virtue of any one, this is *inward honouring*; when we teſtify this by our words or actions, this is *external* honouring: And ſo on the other ſide, when we do in our thoughts take notice of, and acknowledge the vileneſs or worthleſneſs of things or perſons, this is *inward deſpiſing*, which in Scripture phraſe is ſtiled, *counting a thing vile, ſetting it at nought, eſteeming it as dung.* When we teſtify this by words or actions, this is *external contempt*, and in Scripture phraſe is expreſſed by *kicking at a thing; treading it under our feet, caſting it behind us, turning our back upon it, puffing at it.*

Deut. 25. 3
37. 16
Phil 3. 8.
1 *Sam.* 2. 29.
Pſal. 12. 5.

Both theſe abſtractly conſidered, are of an indifferent nature, neither good nor evil in themſelves, but as they are circumſtantiated by their manner, and meaſure, and objects Every man ſhould proportion his eſteem of things, according to the real value of them, not *calling good evil, or evil good.* Where there

there is no real worth, men may, and ſhould deſpiſe; nor ought they towards ſuch things to give any honour. 'Tis as much a mans duty *to contemn a vile perſon, as to honour them that fear the Lord.* Pſal. 15.4.

'Tis true, we ſhould abſtract betwixt the *calling* and *perſons* of others. There may be a reverence due to the *calling*, when there is none due to the *perſon* but only upon account of his calling; and 'tis a ſin in men not to diſtinguiſh in ſuch caſes. But withal 'tis ſo eaſy, ſo common, ſo natural a thing, for the ſcandal of a *perſon* to reflect upon his *profeſſion*, that it ſhall be put upon his account, as being part of his guilt, that he hath laid a ſtumbling block in the way of others, by cauſing them to ſpeak evil of his profeſſion. And as things now are in the world, nothing can be more vain, than for men to think that the *dignity of their places* will keep up their eſteem in the hearts of others, without the foundation of *real worth in their perſons.*

Now amongſt all other things whatſoever, there is nothing that hath in it ſo much provocation as *contempt*. 'Tis much worſe than *hatred*; *that* ſuppoſeth

ſeth a man to be conſiderable. The Philoſophers make it to be the occaſion of all *anger*: And experience tells us, 'tis one of the hardeſt things to be born, even by wiſe and good men.

And ſo much ſhall ſerve to be ſpoken concerning the *firſt* head, the nature of *deſpiſing*, &c. I proceed to the *ſecond.*

II. Of what great importance it is for perſons in this ſacred function, to preſerve themſelves from *contempt.* Which may be made evident by three kind of arguments, upon the account of 1. *Fitneſs* and *congruity*: 2. *Neceſſity* and *duty*: and 3. *Intereſt* and advantage.

1. Upon the account of *Fitneſs* and *Congruity*: The *Apoſtle* had declared it as a rule a little before the *Text*, v. 10. That *Servants ſhould adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.* By Servants in thoſe times are meant, amongſt others, ſuch as were *ſlaves*, bought and ſold in the Market, the loweſt and baſeſt condition of men; and yet theſe are obliged by the rules of Chriſtianity ſo to demean themſelves, as to *adorn their profeſſion*, and win over others to a love of it; and therefore thoſe of a higher calling and ſtation, muſt needs be ſo much the

the more obliged to this, as they have greater abilities and opportunities for it.

The men of our *Calling* ought to be of ſuch eminence, that others in compariſon to them, may be called *Grex*, the *Flock*, of which we are the *Governours* and *Paſtors*. 'Tis required as a previous condition to capacitate a man for this *Calling*, that he muſt have *a good report of thoſe that are without*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 7. i. e. of the Heathens and Unbelievers; who, though they are not competent judges of *faith* and *opinions*, yet they may be of *manners* and *honeſty*. And if this be required to admiſſion into that Calling, 'tis moſt reaſonable that men ſhould not loſe it afterwards. We are the *lights of the world*, and therefore ought to contribute to the beauty of it: The *ſalt of the Earth*, and therefore ought to be of grateful and ſavoury converſation.

There lies a more peculiar obligation upon perſons in publick places, to preſerve their reputations clear and without blemiſh. The higher any thing is ſituated in the univerſe, the more luſtre hath it, as the Stars: And ſo likewiſe is it in the body, the

ſuperior

ſuperior parts, the face and eyes, are the proper ſeat for beauty and comelineſs.

A *private* perſon is not ſo much concerned to look after *publick* fame, as he who is engaged in publick employment. That kind of generous virtue which can abundantly ſatisfy it ſelf with the conſcience of well-doing, while in a private ſtation, if once called to any ſuch employment, where it muſt be uſeful to others by its Authority, 'tis moſt fitting then, that it ſhould ſeek the aid of opinion and publick eſteem. Becauſe 'tis this which rules the world, and ſtamps upon things the rates at which they are to paſs. Not that this can add any thing to a man's virtue, more than the light of the Sun doth to the beauty of the other creatures in the univerſe, but only render it more conſpicuous and viſible to others, who are to be influenced by it. That's the firſt argument: There is a *Congruity* that ſuch perſons as are of *publick employment*, ſhould be of *publick eſteem*.

2. 'Tis neceſſary alſo, upon the account of *Duty*, both towards *others* and *our ſelves*.

1. With

1. With reſpect to thoſe with whom we converſe, who are committed to our charge; towards whom we muſt needs be altogether inſignificant and as mere cyphers, unleſs we demean our ſelves ſo as to be reverenced by them.

There are two things which every man ought with his utmoſt care to attend unto, *Conſcience* and *Credit*.

The *firſt* chiefly for our ſelves, the *other* both for our ſelves and others: *Nobis eſt neceſſaria vita noſtra, aliis fama noſtra:* As St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks. He is cruel to himſelf who neglects the *firſt*, and he is both imprudent to himſelf, and uſeleſs to others, who neglects the *ſecond*.

When God gives men favour and reſpect in the eyes of others, the proper improvement of it is, to make uſe of it as an advantage for prevailing with them, and doing good upon them. Whereas without this, all that a man can do or ſay, muſt be ineffectual. If he himſelf be once looked upon as contemptible, 'tis not to be expected that others ſhould have any regard to his exhortaions and counſels. You know the ſtory of that people, who refuſed

their

their conſent to a good Law, becauſe it was propoſed by a vile perſon.

Authority in the firſt notion of it is a relative term, and doth import that reverend opinion which men have concerning the perſons of others: It conſiſts of *Love* and *Fear*. It ſuppoſes as its correlate, *Venerableneſs*, that is, goodneſs and power, in the perſons whom it refers to. And theſe two, according to the rule of Relations, *mutuò ſe ponunt & tollunt*. Where there is no *venerableneſs*, there can be no *authority*, in this ſenſe.

2. Upon account of *duty* towards *our ſelves*, who by being deſpiſed may be rendered deſperate; there being no ſuch way to make a man looſe and profligate, as to have a blaſted name. Shame is one of the moſt powerful curbs to reſtrain men from unworthy courſes; and where this doth not, there is little hope that any thing elſe ſhould prevail. Reproach is ſtiled *the ſnare of the Devil*, 1 Tim. 3. 7. Becauſe they who are deſervedly fallen under this, are as much in his power, and at his diſpoſal, as if he had taken them in a ſnare.

The

The appetite of glory is that natural principle, whereby we are to be quickned unto virtuous actions. And without a ſenſe of honour, no man is like ever to attempt any thing that is great and noble. *Negligere quid de ſe quiſque ſentiat, non ſolum arrogantis eſt, ſed etiam diſſoluti*, ſaith *Tully*. No man doth neglect or deſpiſe a good name, but ſuch a one as doth either *deſpair of*, or *reſolve againſt*, doing any thing that may deſerve it.

3. 'Tis highly advantageous upon the account of *Intereſt*. And that both in regard to the *benefit* to be hereby *obtained*, and the *miſchief* to be *avoided*.

1. For the *advantage* accruing to us, by preſerving our ſelves from being deſpiſed: Honour is the greateſt bleſſing among all humane things which this world can afford us; infinitely to be preferred before riches or pleaſures, and in ſome caſes before life it ſelf. *A good name is rather to be choſen than great riches: and loving favour rather than ſilver or gold.* One that is a generous virtuous man, will chuſe to die rather than to do any thing that may juſtly expoſe him to infamy. St. *Paul* was

Prov. 22. 1. *Eccleſ.* 7. 1. *Ecclus.* 41. 12, 13.

of

of this mind, 1 *Cor.* 9. 15. *It were better for me to die, than that any ſhould make my glorying void.*

And becauſe 'tis a thing of ſo great excellency, therefore do we pay it, as the beſt ſervice we can do, to God, and to his Deputies, *Magiſtrates* and *Parents.* 'Tis the reward of virtue, and therefore doth highly deſerve our eſteem.

Beſides the advantage we have by this while we live, 'tis one of thoſe things that will abide after us, when we are gone out of the world, and for that reaſon a ſpecial regard is to be had to it; and the more wiſe and virtuous any man is, the more care will he take to tranſmit a grateful memory of himſelf to future times: And if he muſt be ſpoken of after his departure, that he be well ſpoken of, that his name may be as a *precious ointment*, leaving a perfume behind it, that men may riſe up at the mention of him, and *call him bleſſed.*

2. 'Tis our *intereſt*, in reference to the avoiding of that miſchief which we may otherwiſe be expoſed unto by doing things that will render us deſpicable. I ſhall mention only two places

places of Scripture which will afford abundant proof to this purpose. One is, 1 *Sam.* 2. 17. Where 'tis said of the Sons of *Eli*, that they did by their scandalous carriage *render themselves vile before all the assembly, and caused them to abhor the offerings of the Lord.* And 'tis worth your special notice, that which follows upon this. I do not know any more dreadful threats in the whole Bible, *Chap.* 3. 11. God tells them, that he will execute his vengeance upon them in such a manner, as shall strike a dread and horror by the very relation of it, and *cause both the ears of them that hear it to tingle:* And again, *v.* 14. *I have sworn to the house of Eli, that their iniquity shall not be purged with sacrifices nor with offerings for ever:* i. e. Those very means which were appointed as the remedy and expiation for other mens sins, shall be no benefit to *them. Sacrifices* and *Offerings* were the things about which they had offended, by rendering them contemptible, causing others to abhor them: And therefore no reason for such persons to expect any remedy from them, whatsoever their particular repentance might do, as to the saving of their souls.

The offences they had committed were so highly scandalous, that God was immutably resolved, *(he had sworn it)* to execute upon them some signal vengeance in this life, that should manifest to the world how much he was concerned, for that dishonour which these men had cast upon his Worship. Which judgments did afterwards accordingly come to pass in the sudden death of *Eli* and his *two Sons*, and his *Daughter in Law*; in the rejection of *Abiathar* from the Priest's Office; and in that Massacre committed by *Saul* at *Nob*, upon *fourscore and five Priests of this family, together with their wives, and children, and servants.*

1 *King.* 2. 27.

1 *Sam.* 22. 19.

The other Scripture is *that*, *Malach.* 2. towards the beginning, where speaking of such Priests as by their unworthy carriage did render the publick worship contemptible, and *cause others to stumble at the Law*, God threatens that *he will send a curse upon them, and will curse their blessings*, and *spread dung upon their faces*, and make them *contemptible and base before all the people.* And there is nothing more equal, than that those who expose religion to contempt, should suffer under it themselves.

v. 8.

v. 2.

v 3.

v. 9.

See *Jerem.* 23. 40.

Now

Now to put all this together; If we have any ingenuity, and desire to do things decent and congruous to our Profession; any sense of the duty which we owe to others, whom it is our business to perswade; or which we owe to our selves, in the preservation of that whereby we are to be excited unto virtuous and worthy actions: If we have any sense of our own interest, in securing to our selves the greatest blessing, and avoiding the greatest mischief that this world can afford, it will upon all accounts highly concern us, that we do not so demean our selves as to deserve to be despised.

III. I proceed to the third general *head* proposed, namely the *means* whereby we are to preserve our selves from contempt; which are of two kinds: *Negative* and *Positive*.

1. *Negative*, or such things as in order to this we are carefully to avoid. All kind of vices whatsoever, especially such as have in them a more peculiar deformity and turpitude, which are most likely to alienate the minds of others from us.

I obſerved before, that *littleneſs* and impotence is the moſt proper object of *contempt*. *I am ſmall and deſpiſed*, ſaith *David*, Pſal. 119. 141.

So that all ſuch qualities and actions, as will make us appear unto others to be but minute and little things, muſt needs render us deſpicable.

Such are *Narrowneſs* of mind, judging of things and perſons by little meaſures; ſetting up for reputation by zeal in the ſmalleſt matters, with neglect of the greater: Putting the higheſt value upon thoſe little things of gain and promotion, and the favour of men; which therefore ought to be eſteemed but little, becauſe they cannot make us better, and we can enjoy them but a little while. We muſt ſhortly go out of this world, when all ſuch things ſhall be uſeleſs to us, and therefore ought not to come in competition with thoſe other matters, which may conduce to our living with honour, and dying with comfort.

Being ſubject to immoderate deſires, fears, impatience; to be amuſed and tranſported with wonder at outward pomp and grandeur. All which doth ariſe from a wrong eſtimate of things oc-

occaſioned by our own littleneſs. *Magna iſta, quia parvi ſumus, credimus.* Theſe things would not ſeem great to us, if we our ſelves were not little. Senec.

From whence will follow a ſervility of ſpirit, a readineſs to diſſemble, flatter, revile, to bow down to any kind of baſeneſs before ſuch whom we conceive able to aſſiſt or to hinder us in our little deſigns of gain: And on the other ſide, demeaning our ſelves with inſolence towards others from whom we can neither hope nor fear any thing in this kind.

Theſe are blemiſhes, which in all ages the men of our Calling have been accuſed of. And the truth is, they are liable to ſome peculiar temptations in this kind, more than others: And therefore ought to be more eſpecially careful for the avoiding of them.

To which I ſhall only add this one conſideration: If we of the *Clergy* would not have others to deſpiſe us, we muſt be careful not to deſpiſe one another. Thoſe in places of dignity and power ſhould not carry it with too great a diſtance from their brethren. The proper notation of the word *deſpiſe*, is to look down upon a thing, as being much below us.

And much leſs ſhould they permit any of their *Officers*, to carry themſelves with inſolence towards ſuch as are of this ſacred Function. It cannot be but that others will deſpiſe us, when they ſee that we deſpiſe one another.

2. The *Poſitive* means to this end, are, in general, all kind of virtue and goodneſs. But there are ſome things which the *Apoſtle* adviſeth to, as having a more peculiar fitneſs and tendency to this purpoſe, ὅσα σεμνὰ, ὅσα προσφιλῆ, ὅσα εὐφημα, *Whatſoever things are venerable; whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praiſe,* ταῦτα λογιζεσθε, *have theſe things in account*, Phil. 4. 8.

Of theſe I ſhall mention only *three.*

1. *Wiſdom.*
2. *Generoſity* and largeneſs of mind.
3. *Holineſs of life.*

1. *Wiſdom, this makes a man's face to ſhine, and the ſtrength of it to be doubled, Eccleſ.* 8. 1. Puts a luſtre upon a perſon, renders him venerable and amiable, conciliates an honour and an awe from thoſe with whom he converſeth.

By

By *wisdom* I mean, *recta ratio agibilium*, as *Aquinas* defines it. Not only skill in books, and things, and notions, but the art of busineſs, directing a man to what is fit and convenient in ſeveral caſes and circumſtances, the knowledge of humane nature, of the various inclinations, tempers, intereſts of *men* and *times*. 'Tis not ſufficient for him that would be a Pilot, to underſtand the *general* Theory of Navigation, without the knowledge of *particular* Coaſts, and Shelves, and Currents, and Tydes, and Winds.

'Tis by this virtue of prudence, that a man muſt be enabled to *cut off occaſion from them that would ſeek occaſion*, 2 Cor. 11. 12. And, conſidering that great variety and inconſtancy which there is in the judgments and affections of men, the claſhings and intanglements of croſs intereſts, the ſeveral changes and viciſſitudes that befal humane affairs; I ſay, all theſe things conſidered, it is not mere *integrity*, without great *prudence*, that can preſerve a man in a conſtant and clear reputation.

2. *Generoſity* of mind, magnanimity. As littleneſs will render a man deſpicable, ſo by the rule of contraries,

this true greatneſs and largeneſs of ſoul muſt make him venerable. By this I mean an inclination of mind to things that are truly great and noble, making virtue and true honour the common meaſure of every thing, aiming at that which is great and excellent in every kind of virtue; having but a ſmall eſteem for any of theſe external matters, becauſe they can add nothing to our inward real worth.

Every man is endowed with a natural principle, inclining him to a ſtate of happineſs; and hath in ſome meaſure both an ability to judge *of*, and a freedom or liberty to apply himſelf *unto*, thoſe moral actions or duties, which are the proper means for the promoting of this end. Nor is he upon any other account to be juſtly praiſed or blamed, but according to the right or wrong uſe of this natural liberty. And therefore according as ſuch a man doth find either in himſelf or others a conſtant and firm reſolution to make a right uſe of this, ſo doth he proportion his eſteem towards them. Preferring this inward greatneſs, this rectitude of mind, whereby a man is reſolved in every condition, to do that which

which ſhall appear to be his duty, before any kind of external greatneſs whatſoever.

And if men did rightly underſtand their true intereſts, there is nothing more ſuitable or more advantageous to human nature than this. *Magnanimos nos natura produxit, & ut quibuſdam animalibus ferum dedit, quibuſdam ſubdolem, quibuſdam pavidum, ita nobis glorioſum & excelſum ſpiritum, quærentem ubi honeſtiſſimè, non ubi tutiſſimè vivat.* We are naturally born with greater and more generous ſouls than other creatures, and therefore for a man to debaſe himſelf below the Nobility of his creation, may juſtly expoſe him to contempt. *Sen. Epi. 104.*

'Tis this that muſt make a man humble and gentle, ſet him above the common impotencies of pride and paſſion, the falſe diguiſes of greatneſs. Of which kind of temper it may be truly ſaid, *non eſt magnitudo, tumor eſt.*

'Tis this that muſt keep us from being puffed up with proſperity, or dejected with adverſity; free us from being envious, ſuſpicious, fearful, being ſecure upon the confidence of our own innocence; not being ſubject to thoſe vehement deſires and impatience

tience whereby others are tranſported. Becauſe thoſe things which provoke them, ſeem but little to us, and therefore muſt have but little power over us.

'Tis this that muſt make a man prefer an empire over himſelf, before power over others; and the opportunity of being helpful to others, before the advantage of gaining by them; bearing good will to all mankind, compaſſionate, affable, officious, taking all opportunities of doing good to every one. Nor is there any other qualification whatſoever, that will make a man appear more grateful and lovely even to enemies themſelves, than this generous frame of mind.

3. The *third* particular I mentioned to this purpoſe, was *Holineſs of life.* Which is frequently mentioned in Scripture as a proper means to keep our eſteem in the hearts of others, and preſerve us from being deſpiſed. They that would be *blameleſs*, muſt be *harmleſs*, *carrying themſelves as the Sons of God without rebuke*, Philip. 2. 15. And a little before the *Text*, v. 7. the *Apoſtle* exhorts *Titus*, to *ſhew himſelf a pat-*

a pattern of good works, that he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. So again, 1 *Pet.* 2. 16. 'Tis said that a *good conversation will make people ashamed to speak evil of us.* And it was by faith and holiness that *the Elders obtained a good report*, Heb. 11. 2.

In the 1 *Tim.* 4. 12. there is the same precept with this in the *Text*, *Let no man despise thy youth*: To which 'tis immediately subjoined as the most proper direction to this purpose, *but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in purity.*

When a man is careful to say what is good, and to do what is honest; to speak well, and to act better, endeavouring to be what he would seem to be, avoiding all suspicions and appearances of evil; when he is zealous according to his capacity for the promoting of publick good, acting sincerely, prudently and justly; endeavouring to make the times the better for him wherein he lives, this will be the most effectual means to make his name honourable, and his memory precious.

More

More *particularly:* The demeaning of our ſelves with all due reſpect and lowlineſs to our Superiors, is one of thoſe *well-doings whereby we are to put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men,* 1 Pet. 2. 13, 15, 18.

The proportioning of our zeal, according to the real worth and importance of things, that's another *Apoſtolical* direction to this purpoſe. *Rom.* 14. 15, 16. Having ſaid, *Let not your good be evil ſpoken of,* he preſently adds: *For the kingdom of God is not meats and drinks, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghoſt; whoſoever in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, ſhall be accepted of God, and approved of men*

Being mild and gentle, not boiſterous and peremptory; having *the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit*; endeavouring *as much as in us lies to live in peace with all men,* as being that which gives opportunity to the more calm, benign, ingenuous operations of religion in the world.

Wherever theſe qualifications are, they muſt and will contract at leaſt a ſecret reverence, even from thoſe that may outwardly pretend to hate and deſpiſe us.

I have

I have now done with the three general *Heads* propoſed; it remains that I add ſomething briefly by way of *application*, in anſwer to this caſe, What's to be done if men will deſpiſe us, though we do not deſerve it from them? In order thereunto, I ſhall ſuggeſt two things.

I. By way of rebuke to ſuch deſpiſers, who if they would but conſult the Scriptures, ſhould find this unworthy diſpoſition ſet off with ſuch great aggravations, both as to the nature of the *ſin*, and the *puniſhments* that ſhall be inflicted upon it, as were enough to fright men from offending in this kind.

1. For the *Nature* of the ſin: The *Wiſeman* tells us, *He that deſpiſeth his neighbour, is void of wiſdom*, Prov. 11. 12 and *ſinneth*, chap. 14 21. 'Tis made the character of a proud *Phariſee*, to deſpiſe others, *Luke* 18. 9. That which renders men like to dogs and ſwine, trampling precious things under their feet. *Eſau* was therefore branded with the note of prophaneſs, becauſe he deſpiſed holy things, *Heb.* 12. 16, 17. All which, tho it be bad enough, yet that is much worſe, which our Saviour

Saviour affirms concerning it, *Luke* 10. 16. *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* And what a horrid thing that muſt be for a poor mortal man to contemn the omnipotent God, I need not, I cannot ſay: He himſelf hath ſaid, that as *he will honour thoſe that honour him, ſo thoſe that deſpiſe him ſhall be lightly eſteemed*, 1 Sam. 2. 30. And he who is the King of kings, muſt needs be the fountain of honour to diſpoſe of it as he pleaſeth. Thoſe men ſhall be ſure to be put to ſhame whom God doth deſpiſe, *Pſal.* 53. 5.

2. As for thoſe *judgments* of all kinds which this ſin will expoſe unto, I ſhall only refer you to ſome few Scriptures.

1. For *Temporal* judgments: See that place, 2 *Chron.* 36. 16, 17. *They mocked the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed their words, and miſuſed the Prophets, till the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his people, that there was no remedy; therefore he brought upon them the King of the* Chaldees, *who ſlew their young men with the Sword, and had no compaſſion upon young men and maidens, old men, or him that ſtooped for age; he*

he gave them all into his hand. Where the ruine of the *Jewish* Nation, wherein they were deprived of all kind of privileges, both civil and ecclesiastical, is ascribed to this sin.

That's a dreadful imprecation in *Nehemiah* 4. 4, 5. *Hear, O our God, for we are despised, and turn their reproach upon their own heads, and give them for a prey in the land of Captivity, and cover not their iniquity, let not their sin be blotted out from before thee.*

2. And as for punishments in *the other world*: St. *Peter* tells us, *that those who despise dominions, and speak evil of dignities, shall perish in their own corruption*, 2 Pet. 2. 10. *And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness*, v. 12. To which St. *Jude* adds, that *there is reserved for them the blackness of darkness for ever*, v. 8. and 13.

II. By way of *Direction*, to those who are thus unworthily despised, not to be discouraged at it, remembring what St. *Paul* saith, that *with us it is but a small thing to be judged of man's judgment*, but to *approve our selves unto God in honour and dishonour*: Considering what he hath promised, that when men *speak evil against us falsly, great*

1 Cor. 4. 3.

2 Cor. 6.

Mat. 5. 11. *great ſhall our reward be in heaven: And*
1 Cor 4. 5. *we ſhall have praiſe of God.* 'Tis ſaid of
Heb. 12. our Saviour, that *he deſpiſed the ſhame*: And ſo ſhould we too, contemn the contempt of injurious ſcornful men. This perhaps was the meaning of that precept to the diſciples, of *ſhaking the duſt off*
Matt. 10. 14 *their feet* againſt thoſe that deſpiſed
Acts 13. 51 them.

Cicero Fuſc. 2. True honour is *Conſentiens laus bonorum.* Such only can give true praiſe, who are themſelves praiſe-worthy. For a man deeply to reſent his being deſpiſed by ignorant or unworthy men, is over-much to honour them, as if their eſteem could add any thing to our reputation.

To ſhut up all in a word; you have heard of what great conſequence it is, that we ſhould preſerve our ſelves from being deſpiſed, and by what means this is to be done. Let me beſeech you to conſider and apply theſe things. We all pretend to be zealous for the welfare of the Church, and very good reaſon we ſhould be ſo: But now, if in good earneſt we are deſirous to promote the honour and intereſt of it, theſe

are

are the ways whereby it must be done; and (whatsoever any may think) nothing else, without these, can be effectual to this purpose.

My brethren, 'tis not so long ago, but that we may and ought still to remember it, what floods of contempt have been poured upon our sacred Profession, how it hath been exposed to indignities of all kinds For which, though there be abundant reason to shame and condemn those unworthy men who were the instruments of it, yet there is cause enough to believe, that the holy Providence of God, who thought fit thus to permit and dispose of it, had just occasion for it, and wise ends in it. Will it not then concern us to examine, what those former provocations might be, whether any of those particulars I have mentioned, that we may endeavour to prevent the like judgment for the future; lest if it should again befal us, it should make an utter end, and not admit of a second remedy.

Wherefore I beseech you, as you have any tenderness for your own

Reputation, for the dignity of your callings, for the peace of the Nation, for the honour of Religion, that you would be very jealous of all such things as may reflect disparagement on your holy calling.

'Tis not the opposition of enemies on all hands that can do us so much hurt, as the scandal and folly of pretending friends. If our enemies be more prudent and holy, more humble and useful in their conversations than we are, it cannot be but that they shall be reverenced, when we shall be despised.

What remains then, but that we make our addresses to the *Father of lights*, that he would continually supply his Church with faithful Pastors, who may make it their business to honour God, and serve their generations, and adorn their profession: That he would sanctify us with his spirit, and fill all our hearts with his fear, that walking worthy of our Calling, we may be honoured while we live, and happy when we dye.

Now

Now *the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work, to do his will; working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever,* Amen.

The End of the fifth Sermon.

The Sixth Sermon.

Eccles. I. 18.

For in much wiſdom there is much grief; and he that encreaſeth knowledge encreaſeth ſorrow.

THere are *two* kind of things which every ſerious conſidering man is naturally very thoughtful about, and inquiſitive after, the *ways* of *Providence*, and the *ways* of *Happineſs*. Both which in reference to the various opinions and conjectures of men, are particularly and largely diſcuſſed in two ſeveral Books of Scripture.

The *firſt* in the book of *Job*, wherein we have the moſt natural riſings and obvious ſuggeſtions of mens hearts, concerning the reaſons and deſigns of Providence in the diſpenſation of good and evil.

The *other* in this book of *Eccleſiaſtes*, wherein are ſet down the different thoughts and attempts of men according to their ſeveral principles and tempers in the purſuit after happineſs.

In the firſt verſe of this chapter we have a deſcription of the *Preacher*, *the Son of David, King in Jeruſalem.*

The ſecond *verſe* is his *Text*: *Vanity of Vanities*, &c. This he doth largely prove by ſome general reaſons to the twelfth *verſe* of this *Chap.* and by an induction of particulars, in ſeveral of the following *Chapters.*

The general reaſons are chiefly *four.*

1. *The fruitleſneſs of all our labours*, v. 3 by which we are not able to procure for our ſelves any ſubſtantial profit יתרון *any remainder*, that would tarry with us afterwards; but like a ſound they paſs away, and leave nothing behind them.

2. *The changeableneſs and uncertainty of our conditions*; in which reſpect, we are much inferior to our other fellow-creatures. This he illuſtrates by *four* examples or ſimilitudes.

1. From the *Earth*, which though it ſeems to be but as the ſediment and rubbiſh of the creation, yet it is better

ter than man in respect of its lastingness. For *one generation passeth away, and another cometh, but the earth abides for ever*, v. 4.

2. From the *sun*, which though it do every day decline and set, yet does it constantly rise again and shine with the same glory, *v.* 5. *But man dieth and wasteth away, yea man giveth up the Ghost, and where is he? He lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more*, Job 14. 10, 12.

Soles occidire & redere possunt;
Nobis cùm semel occidit brevis lux
Nox est perpetua una dormienda.

As 'tis elegantly expressed by a Heathen Poet.

3. From the *wind*, the common emblem of uncertainty, yet is it more constant than man. For that knoweth its circuits, and whirls about continually, *v.* 6. Whereas *our life passeth away as doth the wind, but returneth not again*, Psal. 78. 39.

4. From the *sea*, which though it be as uncertain as the Moon by which 'tis governed, yet it is more constant than man and his happiness. For though the *rivers run into it*, and *from* it, yet that still keeps to its proper

ſtate and dimenſions, *v.* 7. Whereas man is ſtill ſubject to ebbs and flows, to waves and tempeſts, never reſting in any ſettled condition, and at laſt wears out and vaniſheth away. So that in theſe reſpects we are much inferior to the very elements of which we are compoſed.

3. *From that unſpeakable weariſomneſs which is in every condition. All things are full of labour, man cannot utter it*, v. 8. The *eye* and the *ear*, are ſenſes not eaſily cloyed, and yet are they ſooner wearied than ſatisfied; there being ſuch an intrinſical weakneſs in the beſt outward delights, that the moſt capacious ſenſes are quickly glutted, even to a loathing of them.

4. *From the diſability of man by any new diſcovery to reſtore himſelf unto a better condition*; ſince there is no hope of finding any ſuch new way to happineſs, which hath not been formerly tried; from the *ninth* to the *eleventh verſe*. Though theſe latter ages in ſome reſpects are wiſer, yet all their inventions for the ſubſtance of them have already been of old time, and *there is no new thing under the Sun*. That fancy of *Plato* being in ſome ſenſe

sense to be allowed, *that all knowledge is but remembrance*, and forgetfulness the reason of novelty.

These are the general reasons by which the *Wise-man* endeavours to prove and illustrate that common vanity which overspreads the face of all things.

In the next place, he does further amplify and confirm this by an induction of those particulars in which men usually place their happiness; *Wisdom* and *Learning*, in the remaining part of this *Chapter*; *Mirth* and *Jollity*, chap. 2. 1. *Sensual* delights, *v.* 3. Works of *Magnificence* and *Pleasure*, v. 4, 5, 6. External *Pomp* and greatness, *v.* 7. Abundance of *Riches* and treasure, *v.* 8, 9.

The *Text* I have chosen doth contain *Solomon*'s censure and experiment concerning the *first* of these, which of all other things in the world doth bear in it the fairest appearance and probability of affording satisfaction to the mind: This being its proper food, and suitable to its desires, and most excellent in it self. And therefore the Devil being to tempt our first parents in the state of innocence, doth pro-

propoſe this to them, as the moſt likely temptation to prevail with ſuch intelligent natures, that *they ſhould know good and evil.*

Now becauſe Learning is of *two* kinds, either of *Buſineſs* or *Things*; therefore *Solomon* makes a diſtinct enquiry into each. The *firſt* he calls *Wiſdom*, the other *Knowledge*: And he was himſelf very eminent for his great ability in both; having made this choice, when it was put to him, that he might have wiſdom and knowledge, 2 *Chron.* 1. 10. And the *Holy Ghoſt* bears witneſs of him, that in this reſpect there was *none like unto him before him*, nor *after him ſhould any ariſe like unto him*, 1 Kings 3. 12.

And yet this Wiſeman, notwithſtanding all the great ſucceſs of his enquiries, upon a review of them doth find by experience, that as his fruitful ſtudies had encreaſed his learning, ſo had they alſo multiplied his grief. And therefore as the iſſue of his experiment he lays down this obſervation which I have read unto you, *that in much wiſdom*, &c.

The *Text* then is the reſult of *Solomon's* experience upon his enquiry after

after happiness in *Learning*. The chief terms of it are reducible under these two *heads*.

1. The things censured, *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*.

2. The censure past upon them: The *one* brings *grief* or indignation: The *other sorrow*.

I. *Wisdom* is the art of business, directing a man in the practical affairs of life to what is fit and convenient, according to the variety of circumstances. It consists in a solid judgment to discern the tempers and the interests of men, the state of business, the probabilities of events and consequences, together with a presentness of mind to obviate sudden accidents.

II. *Knowledge* doth concern the speculation of Nature in reference to *causes* and *effects*, the *differences* and *properties* of things.

1. Concerning the *first* of these, *Solomon* tells us that *there is much grief* in it. The original word is כַּעַס which signifieth properly *indignation*: and the nature of that is a sharp anger mixed with scorn, occasioned either by contempt in persons, or disappointment in things.

2. As

2. As for *knowledge*, that *encreaſeth ſorrow*: Now *ſorrow* is a perturbation of mind in the apprehenſion of ſome preſent evil, which we are not able to conteſt with or avoid. And leſt any ſhould miſtruſt that theſe were only caſual accidental concomitants, without any mutual influence, therefore he tells us that they are uſually proportioned to one another, for the meaſure of them, and do increaſe together to ſhew their caſual dependence.

We ſcarce read of any perſon in Scripture under greater diſcontent and vexation of mind, than *Achitophel*; in whom it was the eminency of his parts that ſet home upon his thoughts the diſgrace of having his counſel deſpiſed, with ſuch aggravations as made him run upon his own voluntary ruin: And there cannot be any higher degree of indignation than that which drives a man to deſpair and ſelf murder. I ſhall not need to cite that ſaying of *Feſtus*, to St. *Paul*, *much learning hath made thee mad*: Becauſe it was a groſs falſhood and ſcandal as he applied it: But yet there was ſomewhat of the common notion

Acts 26. 24

in

in it, that *Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiæ.* You know that Fable of *Prometheus*, the great inventor of Arts and Philosophy, who is said to have an Eagle or a Vulture perpetually gnawing upon his liver, signifieth those continual cares and anxieties of mind which knowing and inquisitive men are exposed unto.

But the chief proofs of this assertion of *Solomon* I would rank under *three* Heads, by considering that vexation which there is in the *Getting*, *Possession*, and *Loss* of these things.

1. For the *Getting* of them: 'Tis part of the Primitive curse, that nothing is now attainable without *the sweat of our brows*; and the difficulty of every thing is proportionable to the excellency of it: And therefore these being the best of all other things, there must needs be much vexation and labour in the enquiry after them. The *Wise man* speaking concerning the search after wisdom, *v.* 13. tells us, that *this sore travel hath God given to the Sons of* Adam, *to be exercised or afflicted therewith:* He seems to allude unto that natural thirst and appetite after

after knowledge, which our first Parents have transmitted down to their posterity: And intimates the great justice and equity, that the Sons of *Adam* should for *his* ambition and curiosity be punished with a *tantalizing* desire; that the tree of knowledge should be within their view, but out of their reach; so that they could not chuse but desire and attempt after it, but cannot attain unto it. And this earnest desire after knowledge implanted in our hearts, compared with that great difficulty and labour in getting of it, is that *sore travel which God hath given to the Sons of* Adam *to be afflicted therewith.*

Now the perplexities in this kind must needs be very great; whether we consider the blindness of our understandings, or the intricacy of things themselves; the many dark recesses of nature, the obscurity and implication of causes and effects (there being δυσνόητα in the Books of *Scripture* and *Nature*) besides those accidental difficulties, which are occasioned by the subtilty and intanglement of error, the variety of intricate opinions, the many involutions of controversies and dis-

disputes, which are apt to whirl a man about with a *vertigo* of contradictory probabilities; and instead of setling, to amuse and distract the mind. To which may be added that difficuly and labour which is occasioned by the disease of curiosity, to which inquisitive men are commonly liable: by which they are made to wander about after all kind of varieties, and like *Noah*'s Dove are continually hovering, not knowing where to rest themselves or set their feet. So that in all these respects the *Wise man* had just cause to complain, *that much study is a wearines to the flesh*, by reason of those many cares and difficulties in the acquisition of wisdom and knowledge.

2. Nor is it better with us in the *second* place as to the *Possession* of them: It being the property of learning, as not to diminish by communicating, so not to fill up by addition to it: But the thirst after knowledge doth encrease with it; like drink to a man in a fever, which inflames the appetite to a more impetuous craving. Besides that it is apt to bring along with it much disquietnes in other respects, in-

infuſing into the ſoul weak fears, vaſt deſires, jealouſies, impatience, emulations, doubts; in all which reſpects it is almoſt grown into a *Proverb*, that *nihil ſcire eſt vita jucundiſſima.*

The *Philoſopher* hath obſerved it, that the moſt ſtudious men (though they may be naturally chearful) yet commonly are by their ſtudies and retirement made ſoure and moroſe, and leſs patient of oppoſition; as being continually chafed and tired out in wreſtling with difficulties. And when they have leiſure to look abroad upon the ſtate of things round about them, they cannot chuſe but ſee every where much defect and lameneſs, much confuſion and diſorder, beſides the evils that are afar off; and not being able either to avoid theſe or amend thoſe, no wonder though their knowledge encreaſeth their ſorrow. The more skill a man hath in any thing, with ſo much the more diſguſt and regret doth he behold the failings and deficiences in that kind. He that hath in his mind the exact *Idea*'s of *Muſick* or of *Painting*, cannot hear the diſcords, or behold the bungling of ſuch

such as are pretenders to those arts, without displeasure and offence. And thus must it be with every wise man that beholds those irregularities and confusions which he shall meet withal in the world.

But this will yet better appear, if we consider such mens conditions either in relation to their *Sufferings* or *Sins*.

1. For their *Sufferings*: Such persons have usually the most tender sense, and therefore must needs have the greatest sufferings: As an exact health is required to an exquisite pain. They cannot but be very apprehensive of the cares, dangers, and necessities wherewith they are incompassed; the injuries and abuses that are offered to them: *Eccles.* 7. 7. 'tis said, that *oppression makes a wise man mad*, that is, transports him to some unusual rage; such an one being best able to see and to judge of the deformity of any unjust, unworthy action; and therefore his heart must needs rise up with much nauseousness and indignation against it.

A man that by his knowlege hath gotten an enlarged heart, is thereby made less capable of a narrow indigent

condition. He that uſeth to buſy his thoughts in ſurveying the vaſt frame of Nature, the ſeveral ſituations and advantages of Kingdoms, or elſe in cenſuring the miſcarriages of thoſe publick counſels and tranſactions upon which the fate of the greateſt Nations and Perſons have depended; for this man to be himſelf without any kind of poſſeſſion or power, and after all theſe great thoughts to want neceſſaries for himſelf or family, to be inſulted over by ſome ſordid ignorant peaſant; how irkſome muſt this be to ſo ſuch a perſon? And yet this is oftentimes the caſe of wiſe and knowing men: For *the race is not always to the ſwift, neither yet bread to the wiſe, nor riches to men of underſtanding, nor favour to men of skill, but time and chance happens to them all*; that is, the great abilities of theſe perſons cannot ſecure them, by any ſuch ſpecial privilege, but that they may be involved in the ſame neceſſities and caſualties which befal the common herd of mankind.

Eccleſ. 9. 11.

2. As for *Sin*: Such perſons are more expoſed to it, by reaſon of thoſe temptations to which they are obnoxious;

noxious; knowlege in it self being apt to *puff up*. And yet they cannot find so much pleasure in it as others, by reason of those inward regrets and smitings of conscience which will imbitter it to them. Nor can they sin at so cheap a rate, by reason of those *many stripes* denounced against the *knowing Servant*. The *Chaldee* Paraphrase in translating of the *Text*, renders the words thus: *That man who encreaseth in knowlege, and not in grace and repentance, doth treasure up for himself the anger and indignation of the Lord.* So that in all these respects, there must needs be much vexation, in the possession of wisdom and knowlege. 1 Cor. 8. 1.

3. And yet notwithstanding all this, men cannot chuse but be much troubled at the loss of it. Which may be *three* manner of ways.

1. By the *unfaithfulness of memory*: which is like a leaking vessel, and doth quickly let slip the things committed to its custody. Now it must needs be a great vexation to a man to take much pains in gathering in, and treasuring up, and afterwards to let all drop out again through the chinks of a leaking

memory; his labour being to as little purpose as if he had laved water into a sieve.

2. Through the *defects of old age*; when *the sun and the moon, and the stars shall be darkened*, *chap.* 12. The Understanding and the other inferior Faculties being deprived of their wonted light and reason: Childhood returning again to the mind as well as to the feeble members. Tis related of a great *Scholar*, some ages since of this Place, by name *Swisset*; who for his manner of Writing by demonstrations, was afterwards called the *Calculator*; that being grown old, he often wept, because he was not able to understand the Books which he had written in his younger days.

Richard Swisset, *a person that lived about* 300 *years since; of so profound learning and subtilty that* Scaliger *saith of him, that his abilities were* ſera ſupra humanum ingenium. Cardan *and he do both agree in this, that he is to be ranked amongst the first ten of the greatest Wits that ever were.*

* *De subtil.* lib. 16. *Ex.* 324, 340.

3. By *Death*, which shall put a period to our Lives and our Learning at once. Now for men to think, that though they run in never so hot a pursuit after knowlege, yet they must shortly be laid in the dust, from whence all

all their learning cannot either preſerve or deliver them; to conſider that in this, the Wiſe hath not a greater Privilege than the Fool; but the ſame forgetfulneſs ſhall cover both their Memories: *For after death there is no remembrance of the wiſeman, more than of the fool; ſeeing that which now is, in the days to come ſhall be forgotten.* And *laſtly*, to conſider that after death, the Soul of the moſt ignorant peaſant ſhall preſently know more than the profoundeſt *Philoſophers*, or the moſt ſubtile *Schoolman* could ever attain unto. I ſay to conſider all this, is of it ſelf apt to make a man weary of Life and Learning, whereby he is expoſed to ſo much vexation.

I have been ſo long in the Explication and Proof of this, *that it is ſo*, that I ſhall be but brief in the Reaſons, *why it is ſo.*

And I ſhall mention only thoſe *two*, which are put together in the fifth *ver.* of this *chapter*. 1. The *impotency* of wiſdom and knowledge, *that which is crooked cannot be made ſtraight.* 2. The *imperfection* of it, *that which is wanting cannot be numbred.*

The vexation of every thing is proportionable to the disappointment of it; which in these things is so much the greater, by how much the hopes and likelihoods of contentment here, are more promising, and yet the trial and issue more remote and contrary. Now that these things are so far from affording real happiness must needs be evident upon these *two* grounds.

1. From their utter *impotence* and disability for that work wherein our happiness doth properly consist, the rectifying of our crooked natures, restoring of us to an uprightness and conformity unto that image after which we were created. Now, who knows not, that it is above the power of any natural wisdom or knowlege fully to discover to us the deformity of our natural states? much less then can they direct how to recover us out of it. The Devil is perhaps a greater Scholar than any man in the world, and yet all his learning cannot find out a way, how to reinstate himself in his former privileges of a glorified Angel.

2. From

2. From the deficiency and *imperfection* of these things in reference to their own proper faculty, the *Understanding*; *that which is wanting cannot be numbred.* That is, there are innumerable particulars in Nature, which the most inquisitive judgment shall never reach unto. *No man* shall ever *find out the works of God from the beginning to the end.* And this is one of the most proper effects of Learning, that it discovers to a man his own ignorance. Now as there is on the one hand much Pleasure in finding out what a man knew not; so must there be a proportionable Grief in the consideration of those innumerable other things which we cannot attain unto. It was the ambition of our first Parents to aspire unto a perfect knowlege, to *be like Gods, knowing good and evil*; and therefore 'tis but just that their posterity should be thus afflicted by the vexation of their imperfect knowlege. It must needs be a greater trouble to an inquisitive man to consider, that notwithstanding all his pains and care, yet he must grow old in ignorance, and in most things shall know as little, as those that are idle

and fooliſh, *the ſecrets of wiſdom being double to that which is*, as *Zophar* tells us in *Job* 11. 6.

Now this great *imperfection* of our knowledge will more diſtinctly appear, if we conſider it under thoſe ſeveral heads to which it is reducible, *namely*, the knowlege of *Words*, *Things*, *Times*, *Perſons* and *Actions*.

1. That Learning which conſiſts only in the form and pædagogy of Arts, or the *Critical* notions upon *words* and phraſes, hath in it this intrinſical imperfection, that 'tis only ſo far to be eſteemed, as it conduceth to the knowlege of *things*; being in it ſelf but a kind of pedantry, apt to infect a man with ſuch odd humours of Pride, and Affectation, and Curioſity, as will render him unfit for any great Employment. Words being but the images of matter; and to be wholly given up to the ſtudy of theſe, what is it but *Pygmalion*'s phrenzy, to fall in love with a picture or image: As for *Oratory*, which is the beſt skill about words, that hath by ſome wiſe men been eſteemed but a voluptuary Art, like to Cookery, which ſpoils wholeſome

some meats, and helps unwholesome, by the variety of sauces, serving more to the pleasure of taste, than the health of the Body.

2. As for *real* knowlege, that is likewise exceeding imperfect; whether we look to the history of Nature, delivered down to us by the Ancients, which in many things is evidently false, and therefore to be suspected in others; or else to what the industry of these latter times hath discovered; men having not been so diligent and exact in their observations, as not to be deceived with casual and fortuitous events.

The frame of this great Universe as it is represented to humane consideration and enquiry, appearing like a perplexed Labyrinth, wherein there is so much ambiguity in the several ways, so much falacy in the similitude of things and signs, such obliqueness and intricacy in the course of Nature, that even sense it self, which in such things is our chiefest guide, is fain to wander up and down in uncertainties, and instead of leading us *out*, do's many times lead us *into* error. And for this reason, Philosophy hath been

Veralam. Pref. ad Nov. Organ.

been so often questioned and subverted in the very principle of it.

3. As for History of *Times, Persons, Actions*; we have reason enough to suspect that they are generally written according to the *Author*'s interests and prejudices, and do seldom contain an impartial and upright representation of truth.

I do not mention *Divinity*, though here our knowlege be most imperfect; nor hath this been wholly free from its changes and fashions, according to the course of times.

Now all this arises from the imperfection of our knowlege in these things, because *we see but in part, darkly; That which is wanting* in any of them *cannot be numbred.*

If any one should from hence object; That according to this, it were better for a man to be idle, ignorant, and cheerful, than to macerate himself with much reading. If every state of life hath its proper vexation, 'tis best to chuse that which hath least.

To this *Solomon* answers, That 'tis true, every condition is bad enough, yet some are better than others; *For wisdom excelleth folly, as much as light ex-*

xcelleth darkneſs ; and though it doth xpoſe us to ſorrow, yet this very orrow is better than a careleſs ſenſual nirth, For *by ſadneſs the heart is made* c. 7. 3. *etter.*

If it be again objected, that 'tis not maginable how the beſt things in the world ſhould expoſe us to the worſt miſchiefs and troubles.

I anſwer, they are therefore the worſt, becauſe they ſpring from the corruption of the beſt, for *Corruptio optimi eſt peſſima*, the more excellent any thing is in it ſelf, the worſe do's it prove when abuſed or corrupted.

I have been too long in the *Doctrinal* part, 'tis more than time that I haſten to the *Application.*

And here I ſhall not need to apologize for the ſuitableneſs of this diſcourſe both to this Place and Time. Knowlege is here our buſineſs and profeſſion, the great Merchandize that we deal in, and this ſolemnity is our chief *Mart*, wherein 'tis expoſed to publick view, and ought to be after a more eſpecial manner taught and learn'd. And therefore it cannot now be improper for us to be put in remembrance

brance of the many troubles and hazards we are expoſed unto in this reſpect.

You have heard already how the greateſt natural wiſdom and knowledge, is not only ſhort of, but likewiſe oppoſite unto, that reſt and ſatisfaction of mind which we all pretend to ſeek after.

And therefore certainly it muſt needs follow as a moſt obvious and natural inference,

1. By way of *Inſtruction* or Caution, that we have no reaſon to be proud of, or to truſt in that knowlege which we have already attained, or to purſue after more with ſo much heat and eagerneſs as to forget thoſe practical duties which are moſt neceſſary.

2. By way of *Exhortation*, That we have great reaſon to apply our ſelves unto thoſe means which may prevent or remove the ſorrows and dangers to which theſe things of themſelves will expoſe us. And that's the ſubſtance of what I have to ſay in the *Application.*

I. It

I. It may ſerve for *Inſtruction*, to acquaint us:

1. *That we have little reaſon to be proud of, or to truſt in that knowlege we have already attained.* 'Tis true, it hath naturally a fermenting quality in it, being apt to ſwell and puff up; and 'tis an hard matter for a man that hath much Learning, not to have a *broad heart*, as the *Hebrew* phraſe is, that is, a *proud heart*, as our Tranſlation renders it, *Prov.* 21. 4. But yet if it be rightly conſidered, there can be no reaſon why any man ſhould be proud of that wherein the Devil does excel him. And the truth is, knowing perſons, of all others, have moſt cauſe to be humbled in the apprehenſion of their own ignorance and folly, of which they muſt needs be moſt ſenſible. And as for confidence in theſe things, they will be ſo far from aſſiſting or relieving us in our greateſt exigencies, that they will rather add to our trouble and danger. 'Tis not all the art of Reaſoning or Rhetorick in the world that can deceive the Devil, or ſilence a guiltyclamorous conſcience; nay theſe things do uſually help to aggravate ſuch mens conditions, by many

many dreadful apprehenſions of that wrath and vengeance to which their ſins do expoſe them. The damned ſouls could not ſuffer ſuch exquiſite torments, if in the ſtate of ſeparation they were not raiſed to a much higher degree of knowlege than here they are capable of. And as for that great buſineſs of a man's life, which doth moſt of all concern him, converſion and regeneration, *the wiſdom of this world* is ſo far from helping us in this, that *'tis enmity againſt God.* No men uſually are ſuch fierce and bitter oppoſers of the power of godlineſs, as thoſe that have learned heads and unſanctified hearts: *Paul*'s powerful preaching was never more fruitleſs than amongſt the *Athenians*, whoſe learning was ſo far from ſhewing them the excellency, that it made them deſpiſe the ſimplicity of the Goſpel. Our Saviour never met with more malicious oppoſition, than from the learned *Scribes* and *Phariſes*; who did not only by open contempt reſiſt his miniſtry, but alſo by ſecret practices undermine his perſon. And therefore in all theſe reſpects we have little reaſon either of pride or confidence in that know-

knowlege which any of us have already attained.

2. We have as little reason *to be so eager in the pursuit after more, as to forget or neglect those practical duties which are most necessary.* 'Tis true, knowlege is here the business of our particular Callings, as *Scholars*; in which 'tis our duty to be diligent, and our just commendation to be skilful. But yet there is somewhat else of greater concernment to us in our general Calling, as *Christians*, a demeanour and conversation suitable to this Profession; our failing in this will quickly bring a blemish upon the other. There have been of late great complaints (and too much occasion for them) of that contempt and reproach poured out upon men of our Calling; which though it may argue much folly and madness in those unreasonable men who are the Authors of it; yet perhaps there may be too much occasion given on our parts, for want of that holiness and zeal and prudence and gravity which should accompany our profession; besides that many of us do by our sloth and idleness, let other men outgo us in those very gifts and abilities,

ties, which are more peculiarly required to our Calling. Now I say, that which must promote both the usefulness and the reputation of our knowlege, is when our practice and conversation is made suitable to it. 'Tis not an ability to talk or to dispute of Religion; for in these times, what *man*, nay what *woman* almost is there who does not pretend to skill in this? But it is a holy and prudent conversation that must adorn our profession, and provoke others to the love of it. And there are stronger engagements upon us to this purpose, than upon any others. Because by our Callings we profess our selves to be amongst those servants, who do not only know, but are able to teach our Master's will, and therefore our disobedience shall be punished with *many stripes*.

It cannot be denied, but that skill in *Controversies*, the *Tongues*, *History*, *Philosophy*, the *Arts*, are all of them not only great ornaments and advantages to particular men, but in some sense also necessary for the Church; but yet when all is done, 'tis this practical *Divinity*, that must bring us to heaven, that must poise our judgments,

ments, and settle our consciences, and strengthen our comforts, and save our souls. This must be *our rejoycing* at the last day, *the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have had our conversations in this world.* 2 Cor. 1. 12.

2. A second *Use* shall be for *exhortation*, that we would *apply our selves to those means which may help to remedy the sorrows and dangers to which those things of themselves will expose us.*

There are divers things of excellent use in Physick, which yet cannot be safely prescribed without the addition of some correctives to abate their noxious qualities. Such is the condition of this natural wisdom and knowlege, which of themselves have many flatuous and corroding qualities; but yet being mixed with some proper correctives may be made of singular use and efficacy. But you will say, What are these other ingredients? Why the *Apostle* doth prescribe a large *recipe* of them, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 6. *Add to your knowlege, faith, virtue, temperance, patience, goodness, brotherly kindness, charity.* The mixture of these

other Christian Graces, will make our knowlege exceeding wholesome and useful. I must not insist upon the particulars; only there are *two* Graces amongst all the rest, which I cannot omit, being in Scripture-phrase stiled by the name of *wisdom* and *knowlege* and therefore of all others, the study of these must needs be the most proper remedies to be applied in this case namely, 1. *Faith* in Christ. 2. *Fear* of God. These are properly the *graces* the other but the *gifts* of wisdom and knowlege.

1. *Faith* is *wisdom unto salvation* the *other* is but wisdom *unto grief*; this leads us unto a practical acquaintance with the Doctrine of our Lord *Jesus* Colos. 2 3. *Christ, in whom are laid up all the treasures of wisdom and knowlege.* Those are but the refuse and the husk of knowlege, which are to be had amongst the Creatures, the *treasures of it* are only to be obtained by an acquaintance with the *virtue* of Christ's *death and resurrection.* Though a man should be very well skilled in the way of secular businesse, knowing how to bring about his own ends, to raise himself unto power, reputation, estate; yet such

an one is but a fool, if he be either ignorant, or careleſs, how to ſave his own ſoul. And therefore if we aim at true wiſdom, we ſhould make it our chief buſineſs *to grow in grace*, and *in* this *knowledge of our Lord and Saviour* Jeſus Chriſt. St. *Paul* was a man of as great abilities as any that we read of, *bred up at the feet of* Gamaliel, very well verſed in the chief Authors of his time, *Epimenides*, *Menander*, *Aratus*, whom he cites upon ſeveral occaſions; of a very powerful and maſculine Oratory, as may be ſeen by the effects of it, in his diſcourſe with *Felix*, *Agrippa*, *Feſtus*, and the men of *Lyſtra*, who for this reaſon called him *Mercury*. And for his skill in Languages, *he ſpake with tongues more than they all:* And yet this learned man, notwithſtanding all theſe great abilities, doth profeſs that he *deſired to know nothing but Chriſt and him Crucified*, that is, nothing in compariſon to that knowlege, or nothing but what might lead him to it, or further him in it, nay he *counts all things but loſs for the excellency of this knowlege of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord.* 1 Cor. 14. Philip. 3. 8.

2. The second *Grace* I mentioned is, *the fear of God*; Job 28. 28. *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.* This is that which *Solomon*, after all his other enquiries, does at last pitch upon as the only remedy against those anxieties of mind, which every thing else did expose him unto. And he sets down as the utmost result of all his experience, that whosoever would be truly happy, he must make it his chief business to keep up in his heart a holy awe and fear of the divine Majesty, and to apply himself with an humble conformity unto the will of God. This he makes the conclusion of his whole *Sermon*; and I shall shut up all with the same advice, If you will have your other enquiries and learning made useful and comfortable unto you, then, *fear God and keep his commandments*; *for this is the whole duty of man.*

The End of the sixth Sermon.

The

The Seventh Sermon.

Prov. IV. 7.

Wiſdom is the principal thing, therefore get wiſdom.

AMongſt that great variety of ſubjects which *Solomon* treats of, in this and his other moral diſcourſes, there is none more frequently mentioned, or more largely inſiſted upon than this of Wiſdom. He himſelf, when he was put to his choice, having preferred this before all other things, and being ſo very eminent above all other men, for his great abilities in this kind: He doth thereupon take all occaſions to celebrate the praiſe of it, and to excite others to the love and ſtudy of it.

It is one of his *Proverbs* to this purpoſe, which I have now made choice

to ſpeak of: Being a ſubject amongſt all others the moſt difficult to be treated of, partly for the abſtruſeneſs of it, and partly for the copiouſneſs of it, being that which we are ſtill to be learning all the days of our Lives. And therefore it is no eaſy matter, either to explain the nature, or contract the Doctrine of it within a narrow compaſs; which yet I ſhall endeavour to do with as much plainneſs and brevity as I can.

The Word here tranſlated *Principal*, ראשׁ is derived from a Root which ſignifies the *Head*. 'Tis frequently uſed to expreſs the ſummity or top of any thing, the chief or moſt excellent part of it; the original or firſt: It may import a priority of time, or order, or cauſe, or dignity. The Word tranſlated *Get*, ſignifies properly the acquiring ſuch an intereſt and propriety as men have in their poſſeſſions, which they account their own, and which they enjoy for themſelves.

The *Propoſition* I would treat of from theſe words is this:

The

The attainment of true wisdom is that which doth most of all deserve our care and study. Prop.

In the prosecution of this, I shall endeavour, 1. To shew the *Nature* of *Wisdom*, what it is, and wherein it consists. 2. The *Necessity* of it, or the grounds of our obligation to it, from Scripture and Reason. 3. To apply this by some useful *inferences*.

I. To shew what *Wisdom* is, and wherein it consists: Which I would enlarge under these *four heads*.

1. The description of its *Nature* and causes.

2. The several *kinds* and distinctions of it.

3. The *properties* or effects that flow from it.

4. The *opposites* to it.

1. For the description of the *Nature* of *Wisdom*, this is by *Aristotle* said to be that intellectual Virtue, whereby we are directed in our manners and carriage, to make choice of the right Means in the prosecution of our true End. *Tully* describes it to be *ars vivendi*: And to the same purpose *Aquinas*, *Recta ratio agibilium, the skill of demeaning a man's self aright in practical affairs.*

affairs. And *Solomon* to the ſame purpoſe, *The wiſdom of the prudent is to underſtand his way*, Prov. 14. 8. It is the end of ſcience or knowledge to furniſh our minds with due conceptions concerning the nature of things in *general*, their differences, relations, dependencies, whether in themſelves they are either true or falſe, good or evil; but to be able to give a true judgment of *particulars*, concerning what may be moſt fit and convenient, in that great variety of Caſes, which we ſhall meet with in the practical affairs of life, this is properly the work of Wiſdom and Prudence.

The *Philoſophers* in their diſtribution of virtues have generally agreed upon *four*, which they call *cardinal*, becauſe all the reſt do turn upon them as upon their hinges.

Theſe are *Prudence*, and univerſal *Juſtice*, and *Fortitude*, and *Temperance*: *Prudence* is that virtue whereby a man is inabled to judge of what is right and fitting to be done, according to variety of caſes and circumſtances. *Juſtice* is that inclination of mind, whereby a man is diſpoſed and fixed to do in every buſineſs according

cording to the Rules of right, and juſt as he ought. *Fortitude* is that virtue whereby he is inabled to reſiſt and ſubdue all ſuch difficulties as he may meet with in the performance of his duty on the *one* hand, upon the account of danger or fear. And *Temperance* is that virtue whereby he is inabled to overcome the temptations on the *other* hand, of pleaſure and allurement. So that each of theſe virtues are of univerſal extent in all the affairs and conditions of life; and there are many particular Caſes, all ſuch as are of any importance, wherein every one of them is to be exerciſed. When a man ſhall ſtand in need of *Prudence* to direct him in what is fitting; and of *Juſtice* to incline him to do accordingly; and of *Fortitude* to reſiſt thoſe fears and diſcouragements which be put in his way; and of *Temperance* to overcome the temptations of allurement and pleaſure, whereby he may be drawn aſide and inticed.

The firſt of theſe, which I am now treating of, is *Wiſdom* or *Prudence*, and it conſiſts of theſe *three* parts:

1. A

I. A *Sagacity of judgment* to make a true eſtimate of 1. *Things*, 2. *Perſons*, 3. *Times*, and 4. *Events*.

1. Of *Things*, and *actions*, according to the *nature* of them, whether they are *good* or *evil*, and according to their *degrees*, whether *Gnats* or *Camels*, *Moats* or *Beams*, *Mint* and *Cummin*, or *the weighty matters of the Law*.

2. Of *Perſons*, according to their various tempers, intereſts, and inclinations. The *Philoſopher* hath obſerved, that every man hath ſome *handle* in his diſpoſition, which he that can take hold of, may thereby lead him about and perſwade him to any thing: Nor can there be a more palpable folly than to uſe ſuch courſes in order to the perſwading of men, as in their own natures are like to alienate and exaſperate them, rather than to convince them.

3. Of *Times* and ſeaſons; as to the fitneſs of them, *a wiſe mans heart diſcerneth both of time and judgment*, Eccl. 8. 5. That which at one time may be very uſeful and proper, may not prove ſo at another ſeaſon.

4. Of

4. Of *Events*, as to the probability of them: *A wise man foresees the evil, and hides himself*: Again, he knows that things and persons are not to be judged of by their present state, but by their final issues, which he is able oft-times to foresee in their causes.

II. A *Presence of mind*, to obviate sudden accidents, that a man may not be daunted with a surprize, or unexpected emergency, but may have his wits about him, to make the best diversion and provision that such a case will admit of.

III. *Experience* and observation of the most usual and probable consequences of things, which being for the most part acquired upon many trials, and in long time, therefore is this Virtue of *Wisdom* commonly appropriated to old age, according to that in *Job*: *With the ancients is wisdom, and in length of days understanding*, 12. 12. But because a diligent observation of History is somewhat equivalent to this, the world being but a great Theatre, wherein the same parts are repeated and acted over again in several Ages, therefore this may be some help and sup-

ſupply where the other is wanting.

II. The ſecond particular to be diſcuſſed is concerning the ſeveral *kinds* and diſtinctions of it. The Scripture takes notice of two general kinds of it: *One* that is a Grace or Virtue, the *other* that is not ſo.

1. The firſt of theſe is ſometimes ſtiled, *The wiſdom that is from above*, Jam. 3. 17. to ſhew its *original* and deſcent: *The wiſdom of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 7 as the *Author* of it: *Wiſe unto Salvation*, as the *end* of it, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. *Wiſe to that which is good*, as the proper *object* of it, *Rom.* 16. 29.

2. The *Oppoſite* to this is ſometimes called, the wiſdom from beneath, or *which deſcendeth not from above*, James 3. 15. but is *earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.* The *wiſdom of the fleſh*, Rom. 8. 6, 7. *which is enmity againſt God.* The *wiſdom of the world*, 1 Cor. 2. 6. *We ſpeak not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world*, that is, 'tis not our buſineſs to inſtruct men in thoſe ſubtilties of Philoſophy, or arts of Policy, which pertain to theſe worldly affairs, for which other men are celebrated as princes, and famous in their generations; *But we ſpeak the wiſdom*

wiſdom of God in a myſtery, as it follows in the next *verſe*.

But beſides this general diſtinction of *Wiſdom* into *good* and *bad*, there is likewiſe another diſtribution of it according to the ſeveral *ends* which men propoſe to themſelves, and the means whereby theſe ſeveral ends are to be attained. The common end which every man doth and muſt propoſe to himſelf by a natural neceſſity, is a ſtate of happineſs. But according to mens different apprehenſions of this, and thoſe ſeveral deſigns wherein they place their happineſs, ſo may their wiſdom be diſtributed. Now there are *three* kinds of things which men of ſeveral tempers do propoſe to themſelves as their happineſs, either, 1. The gratifying of their carnal appetites in enjoying of theſe worldly things. 2. In that peace and contentment of mind, which may be attained by the exerciſe of moral Virtues: Or, 3. In ſpiritual bleſſedneſs. According to which it is diſtinguiſhed into theſe *three* kinds, *Carnal Policy*, *Moral prudence*, *Spiritual Wiſdom*.

1. For

1. For *Carnal Policy:* The end of this is the ſatisfying of our ſenſual appetites; either by luxury and pleaſure, by gain and riches, or by honour, power and greatneſs in the world. Which the Apoſtle St. *John*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 16. hath ſtiled *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life.* Senſuality, Covetouſneſs and Pride; to which St. *James* hath appropriated the Epithetes of *ſenſual, earthly, deviliſh*, James 3. 15. The more weak and impotent any Creature is, of ſo much the more narrow deſigns muſt it be. 'Tis an argument of an infirm and little ſoul, when men are wholly immerſed in themſelves, and confined to the gratifying of their brutiſh appetites: Such perſons are uſually *ſui amantes ſine rivali*, as *Cicero* ſpeaks; great lovers of themſelves, but without any rival or competitor: If they do attain their ends, they are of all others the moſt ignoble and deſpicable, a kind of impotent vermine amongſt men; and if they fail of their ends, nothing can be more vain or miſerable. Now the end that ſuch men propoſe to themſelves being ſmall and vile, and much below

below the nobility of the humane nature, therefore no wonder if they are put to profecute it by unworthy means, by ſecret underminings, crafty and fraudulent ſurprizals, deſtruction on the one hand, and baſe flattery and compliances on the other hand, all kind of courſes, *per fas, & nefas, quocunque modo*, without any conſideration of what is honeſt or juſt, if it ſeem but likely to promote their particular deſign.

When theſe worldly things are made our chief end, then all thoſe arts and devices that are uſed about them, are but worldly policy, and deviliſh craft. But now when they are made a ſubordinate end, as they may, then the grace or virtue of wiſdom, may be of great uſe in the proſecution of them.

2. *Moral prudence:* The end which this propoſes to it ſelf, is peace, quiet, ſafety as to our outward condition, contentment and joy as to our inward frame, and uſefulneſs to thoſe with whom we converſe; and ſuch a future ſtate of happineſs as the light of nature will inable men to belive and hope for

The

The *Means* for the attaining of this *end*, are the *Moral* Virtues: All thoſe virtuous habits whereby we are inabled to moderate our paſſions, to ſubdue our corrupt inclinations, and to regulate our actions and carriage. Now though this be not the ſame thing with that we call *Divinity*, yet 'tis in the very next degree to it; if there had been no ſpecial Revelation from heaven, this had been the utmoſt felicity that we could have propoſed to our ſelves, or that our natures had been capable of: And now that there is another way diſcovered to repair the defects of our lapſed condition, it doth not exclude *moral* honeſty and prudence as things ſuperfluous, but doth comprehend and take them in as a neceſſary part of Religion, without which a man cannot ſo much as pretend to grace and holineſs; and where it ſtands alone ſeparated from Chriſtianity, how defective and inſufficient ſoever it may be for the attainment of true bleſſedneſs, yet 'tis of it ſelf of a very amiable nature, deſerving love and commendation. 'Tis ſaid of our *Saviour*, that he *loved* the young man in the

the Gospel upon this account: I do the rather mention this, because in the unwary expressions of some men, morality hath been sometimes declaimed against as if it were a vice. 'Tis a disparagement indeed to a man, who lives under the means of Grace, not to get above the morality of the Heathens; but 'tis a far greater disparagement for a man to pretend unto higher attainments, and yet to fall short of them in the practice of moral duties.

3. *Christian Wisdom:* The *end* which this proposeth is a state of eternal blessedness, consisting in reconciliation to God, and communion with him: The *means* for the attaining of this end, are the infused principles of grace, by which our corrupted natures are to be renewed and repaired to their primitive rectitude; *Faith* in a Mediator, together with an hearty, constant and universal submission to the Doctrine of the Gospel. Which is the *wisdom of God* whereby we are made *wise unto salvation:* So that *Christian Wisdom* may be defined to be that habit of mind whereby a man is enabled to propose the true end of

eternal bleſſedneſs, and to judge aright concerning ſuch means as may be moſt fit for the attaining of this end, conforming his life and carriage accordingly.

This doth not aboliſh *human wiſdom*, ſo far as we keep within due bounds, in the getting and enjoying theſe worldly things, much leſs *moral prudence*; but they may be both comprehended under it, as being ſubordinate and ſubſervient to it. Only this hath upon all accounts the preheminence, as propoſing the beſt end, chuſing the moſt certain and infallible means. In theſe ſecular affairs the effect is not always tied to the means; *The battel is not to the ſtrong, nor the race to the ſwift, but time and chance happen to them all.* There may happen ſome unexpected emergencies from undiſcernable accidents, which may blaſt all our deſigns and moſt probable contrivances: Beſides that in a long *ſeries* and concatenation of deſigns, life it ſelf may fail us, and *then all our thoughts periſh.* Nor can moral virtue always attain that joy and contentment which it aims at, conſidering the many infirmities and

temp-

temptations we are liable unto. But now thoſe graces and duties which are preſcribed by Chriſtian wiſdom, are moſt certain and infallible, and never fail of their end.

III. The next thing to be ſpoken unto, is concerning the *proper effects* of Wiſdom; the chief of which *Solomon* tells us is to *direct*, Eccleſ. 10. 10. *wiſdom is profitable to direct.* And this it doth both as to the *end* and the *means.*

1. It directs to propoſe the right end, ſuch as may be perfective of our natures, and ſuitable to the happineſs of a ſpiritual immortal ſoul, *namely*, the fruition of the firſt and moſt ſupreme Being. That which is higheſt and greateſt *in genere veri*, to gratify our underſtandings; and *in genere boni*, to ſatisfy our wills and affections. Any thing that is ſhort of this, will not reach up to the nature of an end, *namely*, to the utmoſt perfection of our natures according to their kind. And for a man to miſtake in his ultimate end, is the moſt fatal incurable folly that may be; not to be remedied by any poſſible artifice or diligence to be

uſed about the *means*: All which will but help to promote and increaſe the firſt error.

2. It directs to conſult about the means: This the *Philoſopher* calls, εὐβουλία, which conſiſts in a judicious inveſtigation about the ſeveral ways, and a choice of ſuch as are more proper to the end we propoſe. There are theſe *two* qualifications requiſite unto all ſuch means as are conſiſtent with true wiſdom: 1. They muſt be *fit* and accommodate to the end. And 2. They muſt be *honeſt* and lawful in themſelves: A defect in either of theſe will expoſe men to the cenſure of *folly*, or of *fraud*. And there are *two* things which every wiſe man ſhould propoſe to himſelf in the management of his affairs, *ſucceſs* and *ſafety*. The making of ſome advance and progreſs in his main deſign; and the ſecuring himſelf from ſuch dangers as he may meet with. In order to which there are *four* conditions to be obſerved, as being highly ſubſervient to the due manner of contriving and executing of things. Theſe are:

1. *Fore-*

1. *Forecaſt* and providence againſt want.

2. *Warineſs* and caution againſt danger.

3. *Order* and *Union* againſt oppoſition.

4. *Sedulity* and diligence againſt difficulties.

Which *four* qualifications ſeem to me to be recommended by *Solomon*, *Prov.* 30. 24. Where he tells us, that there be *four things*, *which are little upon the earth*, *but they are exceeding wiſe*, *ſapientiora ſapientibus*. *The Ants are a people not ſtrong*, *yet they prepare their meat in the ſummer*. *The Conies are but a feeble folk*: Some read this Word *mures montani*, the *Mice*, which for their ſmalneſs ſeems more agreeable to thoſe other examples with which they are joyned. Theſe *are but a feeble folk*, *yet they make their houſes in the Rock*. The Locuſts *have no King*, *yet go they forth all of them by bands*. *The Spider takes hold with her hands*, *and is in Kings Palaces*.

Interpreters do very much vary in their expositions of this place: Some would have it to refer to *four* kinds of necessary things to be acquired by wisdom. 1. *Food* and sustenance, in the example of the *Ant.* 2. *Safe habitation*, in the instance of the *Mice.* 3. *Power*, in the example of the *Locusts.* 4. *Honour*, by that instance of the *Spider.* Implying, that there is no person so mean and impotent, but by wisdom may provide for his own, 1. *Necessary subsistence*, if he takes the right opportunity. Gathering in summer, *working whilst it is day*, *before the night comes when no man can work.* And 2. For his *safe habitation*, by building upon *a Rock, Matth.* 7. Getting *a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens*, 2 *Cor.* 5. And 3. For his *Power*, by joyning himself in *society*, and observing the Laws of it. And lastly, for *Honour*, by his *Sedulity* and diligence in opposing all the difficulties that he meets with.

Others conceive these words to refer to those several kinds of wisdom, which belong to these four conditions or states of life. 1. That of the *Countryman* or Husbandman, represented

ſented by the *Ant*, who lives in the field, and *gathers in the harveſt*. 2. That of the *Citizens*, by the *Mice*, *whoſe habitation is in the Rocks*. 3. That of the *Soldier*, by the *Locuſts*, *who go forth in bands*. 4. That of the *Courtier*, by the *Spider*, *who lives in Kings Palaces*.

There are ſeveral other conjectures about the meaning of the *Wiſeman* in theſe examples, which I ſhall not now mention. Only 'tis obſervable, that the inſtances here made uſe of, are of ſuch Creatures as, beſides their own littleneſs and weakneſs, are withal of no kind of benefit to human life, either as to clothing, or food, or phyſick, but rather noxious and hurtful to men; but what they want in uſefulneſs as to theſe particulars, they may ſupply by their teaching us wiſdom.

1. The *Ant prepares his meat in the ſummer*; thereby teaching and inſtructing us in that part of wiſdom, which concerns providence and forecaſt againſt future want.

2. The *Conies*, or as it may be more properly rendred, the *Mice*, which are *but a feeble folk, build their houſes in the Rock*; and not being able to make any oppoſition or reſiſtance againſt their enemies, they uſe their beſt warineſs and caution for the avoiding of them, and place their ſecurity in the inacceſſibleneſs of their habitation.

3. *The Locuſts go forth by bands:* Though the *Locuſt* of it ſelf be a moſt impotent Creature, eaſily ſwept away or trodden under foot, yet are they ſafe upon account of their numbers, and moſt formidable in their troops, waſting whole Countries before them; ſo that no kind of oppoſition or reſiſtance can prevail againſt them.

4. *The Spider takes hold with her hands, and is in Kings palaces.* Though ſuch places be moſt frequented by company, and kept moſt neat and elegant, the Spiders web being often deſtroyed and ſwept down, yet by her unwearied diligence and indefatigable induſtry, ſhe renews it again, being ready to repeat over her former labours, without deſpondency, as often

often as her losses and necessities require; and by that means gets and continues an habitation in palaces.

IV. The *fourth* thing I proposed to speak to, was the *Opposites* to this virtue of wisdom, whether by way of excess, *Craft*; or by way of *Defect*, *Folly*.

1. The *Redundant* extream of it is *Craft*, guile, a fraudulent subtilty, which may properly be stiled a being over-wise, *i. e.* wiser than the Rule; as if by this a man were able to find out shorter ways than the lawful road, breaking over hedge and ditch and all legal bounds, as if this were the most expedite way to arrive at our journeys end. This is that which the *Serpent* is said to be eminent for, above all other *beasts of the field*, *Gen.* 3. Whence it is usually called a kind of crooked serpentine wisdom, consisting in an ability of surprizing and putting tricks upon others, lying always upon the catch, and dealing by way of stratagem; which is allowable only in a state of War against professed declared enemies, and where matters depend upon sudden actions; and yet even in such cases this

this way of Craft will by a noble and generous enemy be avoided as much as may be: But in our ordinary carriage to make use of it, towards such to whom we profess amity and fair dealing, is exceeding unworthy, and will make a man suspected by every one with whom he converseth, as a dangerous person.

2. The *Deficient* extream of Wisdom is called *Folly*, or simpleness; which consists in such a vicious habit as is acquired by the frequent neglect or rejection of the ways of wisdom. And this is properly both a sin and a punishment. This peculiar dishonour belonging to it, amongst all other vices, that whereas some men have been so impudent, as to boast and take a pride in their dishonest actions; yet there is no person to be found so wretched, as to brag of his Folly. This being amongst all men counted most reproachful, and that which will render one most contemptible.

Thus much for the *first* thing I propose, concerning the *Nature* of Wisdom. I proceed to the *second*, concerning the *Necessity* of it, or the grounds

grounds of our obligation to it, both from *Scripture* and *Reaſon*.

The *Scripture* proofs to this purpoſe may be reduced to theſe *two* Heads; the *precepts* for it, the *commendations* of it.

1. The *Precepts* for it, are very frequent in Scripture, eſpecially in this Book, *v.* 5. of this *Chapter*. *Get wiſdom, get underſtanding, and forget it not.* So *chap.* 7. 4. *Say unto wiſdom, thou art my Siſter, and to underſtanding, thou art my Kinſwoman.* That is, grow into ſuch an intimate relation and familiar acquaintance with it, as perſons uſually have with ſuch as are of the ſame conſanguinity. *Dig for her as for Silver, and ſearch for her as for hid treaſure.* Count no labour too much, that may further you in this enquiry. In the New Teſtament we are commanded to be *wiſe as Serpents*; to be *wiſe unto that which is good*; to *walk wiſely to them that are without*; to demean our ſelves amidſt all the difficulties and temptations we ſhall meet with in the world, with much caution and circumſpection, *not as fools but as wiſe*, Epheſ. 5. 15.

Prov. 2. 4.

Matth. 10.

Coloſ. 4. 5.

2. The

2. The *Commendations* that are given in Scripture to this virtue, are so very numerous, that 'tis very hard to speak briefly of them. There are *four* things which are usually of greatest value and esteem amongst men, *Riches*, and *Honour*, and *Pleasure*, and *Life*. And when the Scripture would set forth the commendation of any thing, it doth frequently compare it with, and prefer it before, some of these things. 'Tis so in the present subject.

1. 'Tis better than *Riches*, Job 28. 16. *Wisdom cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious Onyx, or the Saphyr. The Gold and the Crystal cannot equal it. And the exchange of it shall not be for Jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of Coral or Pearls, for the price of wisdom is above Rubies, the Topaz of Æthiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.*

2. It is it self the greatest *Honour*, and will be a means to advance a man in the esteem of others. *It makes a man's face to shine, and the boldness of*

of his face ſhall be changed, *Eccleſ.* 8. 1. It multiplies the ſtrength of his face, as the *Original* words may ſignify. It gives a luſtre to a perſon, whereby he contracts love and reverence from all that know him. *Good underſtanding giveth favour*, Prov. 13. 15. that is, renders a man amiable and acceptable to others. *The wiſe ſhall inherit glory*, Prov. 3.

3. Wiſdom is the trueſt and the beſt *Pleaſure*. Filling the heart with joy, and the conſcience with peace. *Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. 3. 17. *Wiſdom excelleth folly, as much as light excelleth darkneſs. Now light is ſweet, and a pleaſant thing it is for the eyes to behold the ſun*, Eccleſ. 11. 7. 'Tis not an eaſy matter to deſcribe what great pleaſure and ſatisfaction it is, for a man to ſtand upon the advantage-ground of wiſdom and experience, and to look down upon the miſts and errors and wandrings which thoſe are ſubject to who walk in the vale below.

4. Wiſdom is as our *life*: *Length of days is in her right hand*, Prov. 3. 16. *She is a tree of life to them that lay*

lay hold upon her, v. 18. *Whoſo findeth me, findeth life, and he ſhall obtain favour of the Lord; but he that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own ſoul. All they that hate me, love death*, chap. 8. 35. The *Scripture* doth abound in ſeveral other expreſſions to the ſame purpoſe, which I have not now time to mention.

2. As to the principles of *Reaſon*, it may be made very evident, that Wiſdom is neceſſary to the *ſafety* of our *perſons*, and to the *ſucceſs* of our Actions.

1. 'Tis neceſſary to the *ſafety* of our *perſons*; for the preventing and ſubduing all thoſe difficulties and oppoſitions and dangers that we ſhall meet with. *Diſcretion ſhall preſerve thee, and underſtanding ſhall keep thee, to deliver thee from the way of the evil man*, Prov. 2. 11. *It ſhall teach thee to walk in thy way ſafely, and thy foot ſhall not ſtumble*, chap. 3. 23. Our *Saviour* having ſent forth his Diſciples as *ſheep in the midſt of wolves*, bids them be *wiſe as ſerpents, and innocent as doves*. Innocence muſt ſecure them againſt any legal puniſhment, or the ſufferings under

under juſt government; and wiſdom muſt protect them againſt irregular violence, and the injuſtice of others: Teaching them how to eſcape the ſnare, and prevent the ſurprizals of ſuch as watch for advantage againſt them.

2. 'Tis neceſſary to the *management* of our *affairs* with ſucceſs: That which on our parts is required to the ſucceſs of any buſineſs, is an ability to *contrive* and to *execute*; and this wiſdom only can enable us for.

1. For the *firſt*, *Solomon* tells us, that *a wiſe man's eyes are in his head*, Eccleſ. 2. 14. where they may beſt ſerve him to look round about him, to diſcover the diſtance and relations of things, and what is the ſhorteſt way of paſſing from one affair to another. Such an one can ſee afar off: And though future matters be, for the moſt part, but as a dark empty ſpace, which is alike inviſible to him that is blind, and to him that ſees; yet a prudent man hath ſome advantage in this reſpect, being able in ſome caſes in a good meaſure to foreſee events

events in their cauſes, and accordingly to provide for them.

2. And as wiſdom doth thus fit a man for *contrivance*, by the right ſituation of the *eye*, the organ of ſeeing; ſo likewiſe doth it for *execution*, by the right qualification of the *hand*, the inſtrument of *action*. *A wiſe man's heart is at his right hand*, *Eccleſ.* 10. 2. The moſt uſeful part for employment. He goes readily and wiſely to work, performs things with dexterity and fitneſs, according to the moſt decent order: Whereas *the heart of the fool is at his left hand*, that is, he goes about things awkardly, not with that dexterity and ſtrength as he ſhould. Now buſineſſes thus managed, are uſually attended with ſucceſs; nor is there any thing to be further done on our parts to make any action proſperous. *Nullum Numen abeſt ſi ſit prudentia:* There is for the moſt part a bleſſing from heaven upon undertakings that are wiſely contrived and managed.

In

In brief, *Wiſdom* is neceſſary to our *Obedience*: A man may have good affections, and be inclined to do that which is right, but he will not be able to act accordingly, and to do honeſt things, without ſome meaſure of prudence to judge of particular caſes. 'Tis this that muſt preſerve our minds from error, our hearts from corruption, our lives from ſin, our perſons from ſhame and danger; that muſt fit us for every condition, teaching us *how to want, and how to abound*; that muſt render all our gifts and abilities uſeful. Such perſons as are much below others, as to *Learning*, *Art*, *Wit*, *Diligence*, *Riches*, *Power*, yet by this virtue of *Prudence* may prove much more ſerviceable to God and his Church, more uſeful in their generations, than thoſe who do much exceed them in all theſe other reſpects. From all which it may appear, that there is ſufficient reaſon to infer the *neceſſity* of this grace of Wiſdom.

There remains only one *Enquiry* or *Objection* to be briefly ſtated and anſwered, and I ſhall proceed to *Application*.

Obj. May not this be ſaid to be a *gift* and a privilege, rather than a *duty*; and the want of it, a *defect* or unhappineſs, rather than a *ſin?* Every man is not bound to be eloquent, learned, beautiful, witty, ſtrong. Theſe are bleſſings and gifts which depend upon our natural abilities, leiſure, education, experience, ſome of which are not in our power, and therefore not to be impoſed as duties, as if there were ſin and guilt in being without them; and why may not the ſame be ſaid of Wiſdom?

Anſ. To this *two* things may be anſwered. 1. That *Chriſtian* wiſdom, for the nature and *ſubſtance* of it, is a *duty*; for the *degrees*, a *gift*. Every Chriſtian though of the loweſt form is ſuppoſed to have the prudence of a *Diſciple* and of *ſubmiſſion*, though not of a *Teacher* and of *conduct*. He may have a ſufficient ability, both to underſtand and to make a right uſe of thoſe means, which are neceſſary to his chief end, namely eternal bleſſedneſs. And 2. As for *moral* and *civil* prudence, whereby a man is to conduct himſelf in the ordinary affairs of life: This likewiſe is, as to the ſubſtance of it, a duty,

duty, which all men are obliged unto in ſome meaſure, according as their capacities, conditions, and opportunities may require; though not all alike in the ſame kinds, or the ſame degree. 'Tis no culpable defect in a private man, that he is without the art of government, any more than it is in an Husbandman or Tradeſman, to be deſtitute of skill in Military and Naval matters, which are things of another kind. A private ſoldier is not obliged to have the prudence of a General; nor is it to be expected that every one who can govern a Family, ſhould be able to govern a City. But when a man is called from a private to a publick ſtation, he is then by virtue of this Call, under an obligation of labouring after all thoſe endowments and abilities, whereby he may fill up and adorn his employment. The neglect of ſuch abilities as are ſuitable to a man's ſtation, is not only a *defect*, but a *fault*.

I have now done with the *Doctrinal* part: I ſhall be very brief in the *Application*; wherein I ſhall touch at three *Inferences*.

1. From the nature of Wiſdom, as it hath been deſcribed, it will follow, that no wicked man can be truly wiſe; becauſe ſuch men miſtake in their chief end, preferring earth before heaven, tranſient momentany things before thoſe of everlaſting concernment; than which there cannot be a more monſtrous folly. And they miſtake likewiſe in the honeſty and fitneſs of the means, by reaſon of their diſability to *diſcern betwixt things that differ*, and to *approve thoſe that are more excellent*. They may have good wits, a quickneſs and vivacity of fancy, and yet be far from being wiſe. 'Tis a Proverbial ſaying, That ſome men have good wits, if wiſe men had them in keeping. When theſe two are ſeparated, the former of them doth many times prove a prejudice and an occaſion of miſchief, and 'twere better for ſuch perſons to wear wooden daggers, than thoſe of ſteel.

They may have much humane learning. But great Clerks are not always wiſe men. *Athens* and *Corinth* were for their knowledge called the *two eyes of the world*; as *Rome* and *Carthage* were

were for their military ſtrength, the two *Arms* of it. And yet the *Apoſtle* ſtiles thoſe of *Corinth*, *fools*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 20. *God hath made fooliſh the wiſdom of the wiſe.* And elſewhere ſpeaking of the *Græcian Philoſophers*, he ſays, *whilſt they profeſs'd themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools.*

They may have ſome skill in the Scriptures, as the *Jewiſh* Doctors had, whom yet our Saviour calls fools: yea, *fools and blind*, Matth. 23. 17.

They may have the art of bringing about their ſecular deſigns, growing great and rich, and yet deſerve no better a title than that laborious Rich man in the Goſpel, whom our Saviour calls *fool* for his pains, *Luke* 12. 20.

And *laſtly*, they may likewiſe have ſome meaſure of moral uprightneſs, keeping themſelves unſpotted from the pollutions of the world; and upon that account may be called *Virgins*, but without true Religion and Holineſs, they are but *fooliſh Virgins*, and ſuch as ſhall miſs of their end, *Matth.* 25. 1.

2. Hence it will follow, that grace and holineſs is the trueſt wiſdom. He that is truly religious (whatever

other accomplishments he may want) he is truly wise. *Behold, the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding:* Therefore *keep his statutes, for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the Nations*, Deut. 4. 6. A good man is in Scripture-phrase stiled, *the man of wisdom*, *Micah* 6. 9. And conversion, a *being turned to the wisdom of the just*, *Luke* 1 17. And on the other side, all kind of Sin is in the usual Scripture-phrase called by the name of folly. Now 'tis no small advantage to such as are truly religious, that whatever they may be destitute of as to these worldly matters, yet they have *the principal thing*, namely, *wisdom.*

Job 28. 28. *Psal.* 111. 10.

3. And *lastly*, if *wisdom be the principal thing*, then let it be our principal endeavour to attain it; and *above all other gettings, let us labour to get understanding.* Nothing can be more reasonable, than that our love and zeal toward any thing, should be proportioned to the excellency of it. In order to which we should carefully apply our selves to all those good means, whereby wisdom is to be attained.

As

As for that kind of Prudence which is requiſite to the management of ſecular buſineſs, this depends upon ſome natural abilities, as ſagacity of judgment, quickneſs and preſence of mind, together with the advantage of long experience, and therefore is not to be taught and learnt as other Arts and Sciences may.

We have Schools for *Logick*, *Rhetorick*, *Mathematicks*, *Philoſophy*, but none to teach men wiſdom and diſcretion. And the reaſon is, becauſe this cannot (by reaſon of the infinite variety of caſes) be comprehended under any certain rules; or if it could, yet all the *Maxims* that can be preſcribed of this nature will be but as a workman's tools, which though never ſo good in themſelves, yet without skill in the Artiſt will never make good work: and for a man to think that he may be able in this reſpect to act wiſely by any certain Rules or Maxims preſcribed him, is all one as to imagine that the tools of ſome excellent Artificer ſhould (though in the hands of a bungler) be able to produce good work.

But now on the other hand, that kind of Christian Wisdom, which we are obliged unto as our principal duty, and whereby we are to be made *wise unto Salvation:* This is subject to certain rules and means for the attaining of it. Which in the general are, keeping the Commandments, submitting to the doctrine of the Gospel; and in order to this, *attending at the gates of wisdom, receiving instruction* with all readiness, *hiding the Law in our hearts, continually meditating* upon it; furnishing our minds with right principles, *that 'tis better to suffer than to sin, to have a good conscience than a great estate*; that these *things which are seen, are but temporal, Scenes and Pageantry*, false pleasures, and *but for a season, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

More particularly; 1. The *conversing* with good company: *He that walks with the wise shall be wise*, Prov. 13. 20. 2. *Humility*, which is a grace that will render a man teachable: *The meek will he guide in judgment and teach his way.* 3. *Praying* for it: *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God*, *James* 1. 5. 'Tis he that *gives wisdom*

wiſdom to the wiſe, and knowledge to them that know underſtanding. And Dan. 2. 21.
therefore to him it is that we muſt apply our ſelves for wiſe and underſtanding hearts, beſeeching him that he would firſt direct us by his counſel, aſſiſt us by his grace, and then bring us to glory.

The End of the Seventh Sermon.

The

The Eighth Sermon.

Prov. XIII. 20.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

THIS Book of the *Proverbs* is a Miscellany of Sentences, full of various and profound wisdom, both with regard to things *civil* and *sacred*. It concerns all kind of matters, the customs, vices, humours of men; the duties and business of life; the government and events of providence. The principal rules and observations concerning these, are here set down in plain and pithy Sentences: And though some of them may at first glance perhaps seem to be but obvious and flat, yet upon a nearer and more considerate view,

view, they will all of them be found to be (as they are ſtiled) משלי, *ruling ſpeeches*, ſuch as are fit to have a ſpecial authority over a man, in the guidance of his affairs.

The Text concerns that great advantage or prejudice which will follow upon the choice of thoſe companions with whom we do moſt familiarly converſe.

Society is in it ſelf ſo neceſſary to humane life, that the Philoſopher doth from thence define a Man to be ζῶον πολίτικον, *a ſociable creature*; as if this were one main property and end of humane nature. *Quæcunque vaga naſcuntur & actura vitam ſegregem, armata ſunt, hominem imbecillitas cingit*, ſaith the *Stoick*. *Other creatures which are intended for wandering and ſolitude, are naturally armed for their defence, whereas man is born the weakeſt and moſt helpleſs of all things*, having only theſe *two* advantages for his protection, *Society* and *Reaſon*.

Sen. Benef. lib. 4. c. 18.

But now becauſe the chief benefit of this is not always to be attained in a common relation to a publick Body, without the more private and intimate league of friendſhip; *a crowd*

is

is not company ; magna civitas may be *magna ſolitudo*, therefore the want of friends may in ſome ſenſe be called *ſolitude*, and ſo diſadvantageous to the well-being and comfort of life, *ut ſolem è mundo videantur tollere, qui amicitiam de vita humana*, (as the *Roman* Orator ſpeaks) *that we had as good loſe the ſun out of the firmament, as friendſhip from amongſt men.* Cicero.

It hath been obſerved, that the wiſeſt and greateſt Monarchs that ever were, in the midſt of all their other enjoyments, could not think themſelves happy without this. And though the diſtance of their condition, might ſeem to debar them from this privilege, which requires an equal; yet rather than want a friend, they have deſcended to ſome of their ſubjects, making them to be *participes curarum*, though not without great inconveniences and hazards from the people. Such a high rate have they put upon this privilege of friendſhip.

Adam in the ſtate of innocence, could not be happy, though in *Paradiſe*, without a companion.

Our

Our *Saviour* himſelf, who for our ſakes was content to forgo the uſual pleaſures and contentments of life, yet would not be without this neceſſary refreſhment of an intimate friend, but rather choſe to admit one of his ſervants unto this near relation, *the diſciple whom he loved.*

The *Wiſeman* having obſerved this great neceſſity of friendſhip and ſociety, and of what high importance it is to be right in the choice of them, he doth in this Book ſcatter up and down diverſe Proverbial ſayings for our direction about it. Amongſt theſe the *Text* is one.

For the manner of it, 'tis put by way of *Antitheſis* or oppoſition, betwixt *good* and *bad* company, under the name of *wiſe* and *fooliſh*; together with the ſeveral conſequences which will follow upon ſuch converſation. The one ſhall grow *wiſe*, the other *ſhall be deſtroyed*; wherein there is implied a double iſſue or event, that being twice to be underſtood which is but once ſpoken; it being all one as if he ſhould have ſaid, *he that walketh with the wiſe ſhall be wiſe and proſperous, but a companion of fools ſhall be fooliſh and miſerable.*

The

The *Terms* have little of difficulty in them.

He that walketh. By *walking with* or being a companion, is not meant every casual commerce or negotiation with others; For he that in this sense would wholly avoid wicked men, *must* needs *go out of the world*, 1 Cor. 5. 10. But those phrases do signify a more familiar and intimate converse.

With the wise. All mankind is in the usual Scripture-phrase, especially in the Writings of *David* and *Solomon*, distributed under these two heads, of *wise* and *foolish*, that is, good or bad: Wisdom being that which enables a man to make choice of the right means for the attaining of the right end, and only those that are religious being enabled for this, in reference to the chief end of a man's eternal happiness, therefore they alone are said to be wise. *A companion of fools shall be destroyed*, רעה כסלים ירוע. The Word translated *destroyed*, is derivable either from one root, which signifies to *grow worse*, or else from another which signifies to be *broken* and *ruined*; and is fitly chosen out to comprehend both senses. Besides, that it has an elegant

elegant alluſion by way of *Paranomaſia* unto the former word רעה, companion.

The chief ſcope of the *Text* may be ſummed up in this *Obſervation.*

That every mans preſent and future welfare, doth very much depend upon the right choice and improvement of thoſe friends or companions with whom he doth moſt familiarly converſe.

If with ſuch as are good, he ſhall be wiſe and happy; if with wicked perſons he ſhall prove fooliſh for the preſent, and miſerable for the future.

So that the ſubject I am to treat of is very proper and ſuitable to this Place, which being chiefly intended for education, unto which the company and friends that men make choice of doth ſo much contribute; therefore it can never be unſeaſonable here to put them in remembrance, or to ſtir them up to their duties in this reſpect.

For the clearing of this *Obſervation*, it may be made very evident from diverſe Scriptures.

Upon

Upon this account it is, that we have ſuch frequent cautions and threats againſt converſing with bad company. This was the meaning of all thoſe ſevere prohibitions in the ceremonial Law, againſt *touching of any unclean thing*; which in the morality of it (ſay the Ancient *Fathers* and other *Interpreters*) doth ſignify that exact care which we ought to have againſt all ſuch company whereby we may contract any inward pollutions.

'Tis obſervable, that he who touched a dead beaſt, was unclean but *till the evening*, *Levit.* 11. 24. But he who touched a dead man was unclean *for ſeven days*, *Numb.* 19. 11. ſignifying a bad man to be the moſt dangerous of all other Creatures. For that this in Scripture-phraſe is meant by *a dead man*, may be ſufficiently explained by that expreſſion of the *Apoſtle*, where he ſtiles wicked men to be ſuch as are *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, Epheſ. 2. 1. *even whilſt they live*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 6. And elſewhere they are ſaid to be *whited ſepulchers*, which may appear beautiful outwardly, but *within are full of dead mens bones, and all uncleanneſs*, Matth. 23. 27.

That's a very ſharp and elegant reprehenſion which the Prophet uſes towards *Jehoſaphat*, in reference to his aſſociation with *Ahab*, 2 *Chron.* 19. 2. *Shouldſt thou love them that hate the Lord?* He puts it by way of queſtion, to ſhew the inexcuſable inconſiſtency of thoſe mens actions who pretend to love God, and yet will be friends to thoſe that hate him.

Prov. 22. 24. *Make no friendſhip with an angry man; and with a furious man thou ſhalt not go, leſt thou learn his ways.* And becauſe ſome might be apt to think that they could converſe with bad men without any ſuch danger; therefore 'tis further added, *leſt thou learn his ways, and get a ſnare to thy ſoul.* Implying, that though a man be very wary to avoid the corruption of bad company, yet it may inſenſibly ſteal upon him, and ſurprize him as a *ſnare.*

There are divers the like Precepts in the *New Teſtament*, 2 *Tim.* 3. The Apoſtle having recited a long Catalogue of vitious perſons, *deſpiſers of thoſe that are good, heady, high-minded, having a form*, &c. adds this clauſe at the end of it, *from ſuch turn away*

that

that is, avoid as much as may be all converſe with them. And there is a ſolemn adjuration, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 6. *Now we command you, Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that you will draw your ſelves from every brother that walketh diſorderly.* That place doth not ſo properly ſignify excluſion *à ſacris*, but from familiar converſe.

Pſal. 15. 4. 'Tis ſet down as a ſpecial mark and evidence of ſuch as ſhall be ſaved, *in whoſe eyes a vile perſon is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.*

And holy *David* is very frequent in the proof of his integrity, and conſequently of his happy condition from this ſign, by his diſlike of wicked company, and his love to thoſe that are good.

Pſal. 26. 4, 5. *I have not ſate with vain perſons, neither will I go in with diſſemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil-doers, and will not ſit with the wicked.* Pſal. 101. 4. *I will not know a wicked perſon.* Ver. 5. *Whoſo privily ſlandereth his Neighbour, will I cut off; him that hath a high look and proud heart, will I not ſuffer.* Pſal. 139. 21. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and*

am not I grieved with thoſe that riſe up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, and count them mine enemies. *Pſal.* 120. 5. He bemoans his unhappineſs that he was forced *to dwell in Meſhec*, and to have *his habitation in the tents of Kedar*, that is, amongſt ſuch ungodly and cruel men as thoſe of that Country.

And ſo on the other ſide, he profeſſes that his *delight was in the ſaints, and to the excellent of the earth*, Pſal. 16. 3. *Mine eye ſhall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me*, Pſal. 101. 6. *I am a companion for all thoſe that fear thee, and keep thy precepts*, *Pſal.* 119. 63. It were eaſy to cite abundance of other *Scriptures* to this purpoſe.

And there is very good *reaſon*, why the nature of a man's friends or company ſhould be looked upon as of ſuch great conſequence to his well-being: Becauſe they have ſuch a ſpecial influence, not only upon a man's temper and manners, but upon all his chief concernments.

There are *four* things wherein moſt men place their well-fare, ſome or all of which every rational man doth pro-

propoſe to himſelf in the choice of his friends. Theſe are *reputation*, *ſafety*, *comfort*, *profit*. Now each of theſe is only attainable by converſing with thoſe that are good.

1. For *reputation* or honour: Wicked men are *fools* in the phraſe of the *Text*; and what credit can a wiſe man expect by converſing with fools? They are ſtiled *beaſts* in Scripture, *dogs*, and *ſwine*, and *vipers*; And 'tis the loweſt moſt ignoble condition that our humane natures can be depreſt to, with *Nebuchadnezzar* to converſe with *beaſts*. *Job* doth make it his great grief and complaint, *I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to eſtriches*, *Job* 30. 29. They are *dead men* in the Scripture-phraſe, and *what ſhould the living do amongſt the dead:* They are *whited ſepulchers that are full of rottenneſs*, and none but a *mad man*, one that is poſſeſt with a Devil, *will live among tombs*. *Dan.* 4.32. *Luke* 24.5. *Matth.* 23. 27.

On the other ſide, good men are the *excellent of the earth* Such alone are truly noble and magnanimous, though not in outward reſpects, yet in regard of intrinſecal value, which can only put a true worth upon a *Pſal.* 16. 3.

man. So *the righteous is always more excellent than his neighbour. Job* upon the dunghill, and *Jeremiah* in the mire, had more real worth in them, than any of the greateſt men of the world in the midſt of all their pomp and glory. The Saints of old, when in their moſt deſpicable condition, *wandring about in ſheep-skins and goats-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented*, were in themſelves of ſo noble and ineſtimable a value, that, in the judgment of the Holy Ghoſt, *the world was not worthy of them.* Theſe are they that have the higheſt relations, they are the *children of God, heirs of a kingdom*, the *ſpouſe*, the *members* of Chriſt: And therefore whoever would propoſe to himſelf honour and reputation in his ſociety, muſt make choice only of ſuch companions.

2. For *ſafety*; The *Text* tells us, that *a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed.* Good men may be ſometimes involved in the puniſhments of bad company, and periſh in their ſins: *Rev.* 18. 4. *Come out of her, my people, leſt you receive of her plagues.* That's a known ſtory of St. *John*, who durſt not ſtay in the ſame Bath where

Ce-

Cerinthus the Heretick was, for fear he might be ſurprized with ſome ſudden judgment. Wicked men are infected, leprous perſons; and who can converſe with ſuch without danger? If any one ſhall perſuade himſelf that he can enjoy their company, and yet eſcape their contagion; he may as well think to ſuſpend the natural operation of fire; *Can any one think to take coals in his boſom, and not be burned? Or can a man walk barefoot upon burning coals, and yet not hurt himſelf?* Prov. 6. 28. The converſing with bad company hath as unavoidable and powerful an efficacy as theſe natural agents which work neceſſarily, whoſe operations cannot be ſuſpended: Or if any ſhould poſſibly ſo far eſcape, as not to be *burnt with the fire* of bad company, yet he muſt needs be *blacked with their ſmoak*, which every prudent Chriſtian will be careful to avoid.

Whereas on the other ſide, every one fares the better for the company of thoſe that are good. They are the *lights of the world*, *the ſalt of the earth*, *the pillars of a nation*, thoſe that *ſtand in the gap* to prevent an inundation of judgment. The place

is the safer for them where they live. *Ten righteous persons* may sometimes be enough to save a whole City from temporal ruine. *Potiphar's* house was blessed for *Joseph's* sake, *Gen.* 39. 5. and all the passengers in the ship were saved from drowning for St. *Paul's* sake, *Acts* 27. 24. And if their cohabitation or common neighbourhood may be so advantageous, what is it then to be leagued unto them by a nearer and more intimate tye of friendship?

3. For *comfort*: This is one of the principal ends of friendship, to ease and refresh a man amidst the anxieties of life; and there is nothing of greater efficacy to this purpose. *How pleasant is it for brethren to live together in unity! Quantum bonum est ubi sunt præparata pectora, in quæ tutò secretum omne descendat, quorum sermo solicitudines leniat, sententia consilium expediat, hilaritas tristitiam dissipet, conspectus ipse delectet?* What a great comfort and privilege is it to have another self to whom a man may freely communicate all his secret troubles; whose conference may help to assuage our cares, whose counsel to expedite our

Psal. 133. 1.

Seneca de Tranq. c. 7.

diffi-

difficulties, whoſe cheerfulneſs to diſſipate our ſadneſs, whoſe very look and preſence doth delight? As *oyntment and perfumes rejoyce the heart, ſo doth the ſweetneſs of a man's friend*, Prov. 27. 9.

But now this cannot be expected from any wicked perſon. There is ſuch an utter inconſiſtency and oppoſition betwixt good and bad, that there cannot be any communion or harmony betwixt them: For *what communion hath light with darkneſs?* 2 Cor. 6. 14. Speaking of thoſe who are unequally yoked; *An unjuſt man is an abomination to the juſt, and he that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked*, Prov. 29. 27: There is a natural enmity betwixt them, being of oppoſite principles and ways.

How is it poſſible for a man that hath any love or zeal for God, to delight in thoſe by whom He is continually diſhonoured and provoked? Inſtead of any refreſhment by ſuch company (if a man have *David's* temper) it will ſtill adminiſter new occaſion of trouble and ſorrow. *I beheld the tranſgreſſors, and was grieved. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, becauſe men* Pſal. 119. 136, 158.

keep

keep not thy laws. No man can delight in thoſe that deſpiſe and reproach him. Why now a holy man looks upon all rebellions againſt God, as being indignities againſt himſelf, *Pſal.* 69. 9. *The reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.*

Whereas on the other ſide: Thoſe that are *wiſe* in the phraſe of the Text, are the moſt delightful company that are. *Wiſdom makes a man's face to ſhine*, puts a ſplendor and amiableneſs upon a perſon: And for this reaſon, the communion of Saints is to be eſteemed one of the greateſt comforts and privileges that we are capable of in this world. 'Tis a kind of *excommunication* to be debarred of ſuch company; and it ſhall be a great part of our joy and happineſs in Heaven, that we ſhall there converſe with the *ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.*

4. And laſtly, for *Profit*: The moſt uſual reaſon of men's friendſhip in the world, is the hopes they have of getting by one another: though this in it ſelf is mercenary and poor, *arva enim & pecudes iſto modo diliguntur*, *Men love their cattel and their land upon this account*; they ſhould love their friends from an higher

higher principle. But yet, if any ſhould look for this, 'tis not to be had from thoſe that are bad: There is nothing to be expected from ſuch friends, but the increaſe of our ſins and of our puniſhments: *The beſt of them is a brier and a thorn*, which may pull off our fleece, deprive us of our defence and our innocence; take from us what we have, but can contribute nothing: Or if we ſhould get ſome outward advantage by them, yet we ſhall get partnerſhip in their guilt, by that approbation which we ſeem to give to them in our converſing with them. We may harden them in their impenitency, blemiſh our profeſſion; and what outward gain can be ſufficient compenſation for ſuch damages? *Micah* 7.4.

Whereas in converſing with thoſe that are good, there are theſe advantages. 1. Their example will by degrees inſinuate into the mind, and obtain the force of precepts, exciting us to a holy emulation. 2. Their very preſence will affect us with ſome kind of awe againſt evil. *Eſt aliquid quod ex magno viro vel tacente proficias.* 3. Their conference, wholeſome and ſavory, *ad-* *Sen. Ep.* 94.

administring grace to the hearers. 4. Their counsel, faithful, and wise, and hearty. 5. Their prayers, powerful, ready. And 'tis not easily imaginable, what an advantage that is, to have a praying-friend or companion. We esteem it a great privilege to have a friend at Court, who is able to further us in our business and petitions, to have any special interest in a favourite; why, every good man hath *power with God*, and can prevail with him.

But I have stayed too long in the Doctrinal parts of this Discourse.

There are three lessons I would briefly insist upon in the *Application* of it.

1. That we would take notice of the great benefit to be obtained by the right improvement of society and mutual converse with one another.

2. That we of this place would be careful, both for our selves and those committed to our charge, in the right choice of our friends and company.

3. That we would labour for those proper Qualifications and Abilities which may render us acceptable and useful in our conversing with others.

1. For the *first*, that we would take notice of the great benefit to be obtain'd by

by Society. One chief reaſon why in theſe Places men do not make ſo great a progreſs either in piety or learning as might be expected from thoſe ſpecial advantages which here we enjoy, is becauſe they are not ſo careful to improve the benefit to be had by ſociety. Nothing more uſual amongſt men of all ranks and conditions, than to joyn together in ſome common deſign for the improvement of this quality of ſociableneſs unto mutual benefit. This is the chief ground of all thoſe common Aſſociations amongſt men: In ordinary affairs, *Corporations* for Cities, *Companies* for Trades; and ſo in higher matters, *Univerſities* and *Colleges* for Learning, paricular Churches for Religion: Each of which in their kinds have in them a natural aptitude to afford ſome ſpecial help for the promoting of their ſeveral ends, though perhaps none of them, eſpecially not the *two* laſt, are uſually improved to the utmoſt benefit they are capable of. 'Tis not eaſie to expreſs what great advantage might be obtained if men would but ſtudy to make the right uſe of mutual converſe. We may ſee daily, eſpecially by late experience, how men

men of common and low breeding, being called out to ſuch inployments, wherein they have been neceſſitated to put forth themſelves in a more than ordinary way of converſing together, and debating of buſineſſes with one another, how ſtrangely their parts are heightned, how judicious and nimble they grow at buſineſs, how ready at diſcourſe; whereas a Bookiſh man, that ſpends the greateſt part of his time in reading and ſtudy, commonly he doth not know more, or if he ſhould, yet is he leſs fit for thoſe actions and buſineſſes to which his knowledge ſhould be applied. And therefore the great and active men of the World have ſtill looked upon knowledge thus acquired, as *Pedantry*, which rendred a man unfit for any great imployment. And this is one reaſon of thoſe prejudices which by ſome men have been lately taken up againſt theſe Places of Learning; becauſe they ſee ſome others that have been bred up in another way, to be as knowing and as uſeful men, as thoſe that come from hence; though ſuch perhaps, beſides the eminency of their natural abilities, have had ſome other

ſpecial

ſpecial advantages in their educations, ſome way aquivalent to what is to be had in theſe Places, which ought to be conſidered and allowed for; yet it cannot be denied, but that we our ſelves may give too much occaſion to ſuch prejudices, by not improving all the helps we have to the beſt purpoſes.

I cannot ſtand to mention how much men might by this means promote their knowledge in the whole Circle of humane learning; particularly in that ability of a ready, voluble, popular Rhetorick (wherein ſtudious and retired men are commonly defective) though it be ſo neceſſary in all kind of imployments, eſpecially for the gifts of Prayer and Preaching.

But chiefly in matter of practical Religion, which would be much advantaged if men were but more free towards one another in communicating their doubts, temptations, comforts; warming their affections, and building up one another by mutual conference.

2. That we of this Place would be very wary and careful both for our ſelves and thoſe committed to our charge,

charge, in the right choice of our friends and company.

There is nothing uſually hath a greater influence upon a man's temper and carriage, than the company with whom he doth converſe. And hence is it that if good and bad be joyned together in any near ſociety, they either quickly part, or become alike. And, 'tis the infirmity of our natures, that grace in the beſt men is ſo imperfect, and ſin ſo powerful, that in the conjunction of good and evil, the good by a natural courſe are more eaſily corrupted, than the evil rectified.

We all know that it hath been the bane of many young men ſent hither for education, to miſtake in the firſt choice of their company: And 'twere well if ſome publick brand could be ſet upon ſuch looſe flagitious perſons, as make it their buſineſs to ſeduce and corrupt others. A *Leper* under the law was the type of a ſinner; and he was to go with his head uncovered, that others might know and avoid him. Theſe cloſe and covered ſinners are very dangerous, and may do much hurt by their infection; there is ſcarce any ſuch to be converſed with, *Qui non*

non aliquod nobis vitium, aut commendat, aut imprimit, aut nescientibus allinit.

'Tis true, a man may make good use of the worst company, by observing the deformity, and hating the evil of them the more; but yet there is this danger in the frequent converse with such, that the edge of our zeal and hate should be somewhat abated by custom. He that with *Lot vexeth his soul with the wicked conversation* of those amongst whom he lives, may in time be less and less vexed according as they grow more familiar to him. Besides, conversing with such will be a means to make a man satisfie himself with any low or weak degrees of goodness (which perhaps in comparison to his company may be cosiderable;) whereas amongst those that are better, we have still new matter of imitation and provocation. 'Tis a good rule of a heathen, *Cum his conversare, qui te meliorem facturi sunt; illos admitte, quos tu potes facere meliores. Chuse those for your intimates, by whom you may be made better your selves; admit such, of whom you have any probable hopes that they may be made better by you.* Sen. Ep. 7.

Nothing is more incongruous and unsuitable than for a man that pretends love to Religion, to delight in those that care not for it. Such persons are of opposite relations and principles. Every good man is *on the Lords side*, *the friend of God*, and consequently is bound *to hate that which is evil.* Wicked men are his enemies, the *Sons of Belial*, *of their Father the Devil:* Good men are such as *walk with God*, and have their *faces towards Sion.* Wicked men walk contrary unto him, and turn their backs upon him; And therefore such are by no means fit to associate withal.

Exod. 32. 26. *Joh.*15.15. *Psal.*97.10 2 *Chron.* 19. 6.

On the other side; Good men are all of a City, *fellow Citizens with the Saints*; all of a family, *of the houshold of faith*; all of a body, *a body fitly joyned together and compact, by that which every joynt supplieth.* God delights in them; tho he inhabit eternity, and dwells in that high and lofty place, yet he hath respect to those of humble and contrite spirits. They are styled *his portion, his inheritance*; *a peculiar treasure unto him*, *the dearly beloved of his soul*: *he sets apart the man that is godly for himself.* They that do not love such company here, have

Gal 6. 10. *Ephes.* 4. 16. *Deut.*32.9. *Exod.*19.5 *Jerem.* 12. 7. *Psal.* 4. 3.

have little reaſon to expect that they ſhall enjoy communion with them hereafter.

A man may examine the choice of his friends by this Rule: Suppoſe he were in ſome great exigence, wherein there were no help to be expected but from heaven, can he then with any confidence ſend to his uſual companions to relieve him with their prayers? It may be he could heretofore freely diſcourſe and jeſt with them, but are they fit to pray for him; If not, this may convince his conſcience that he had made a bad choice.

3. That we would labour for thoſe ſpecial qualifications and abilities which may render us acceptable and uſeful in our converſing with others.

There are *four* conditions, amongſt many others, that are more eſpecially ſuitable to this purpoſe.

1. *A readineſs to communicate, according to the gifts we have received, ſo miniſtring the ſame one to another as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God.* There is much envy and narrowneſs of ſpirit in that cloſe reſerved humour which ſome men have; who confine all their gifts to themſelves; 1 Pet. 4. 10.

ſelves, as if they ſhould loſe their own knowledge by communicating of it. Such men live to themſelves, as if they were not members of a body.

2. *Humility*, That's a ſociable grace, lovely in it ſelf, and acceptable to all: It fits a man both to learn and to teach; ſuch an one will not contend, cenſure, diſdain, but is kindly affectioned to others, eſteeming better of them, than of himſelf.

3. *Prudence*, in diſtinguiſhing of mens tempers, prejudices, infirmities; in diſcerning of the right ſeaſons and advantages to do good amongſt them: Teaching a man ſuch an amiable and alluring facility, whereby he may inſinuate into the affections of others, and the more eaſily provoke them to love and good works.

4. *Ingenuity*, and *candor of diſpoſition*, in owning of our own weakneſſes or faults, another's gifts or preheminences. A ſobriety and calmneſs of ſpirit, in ſuſpending raſh cenſures, bitter expreſſions, or whatever may exaſperate; *Forbearing one another in love*. There is in ſome good men ſuch a ſower and rigid ſeverity, ſuch a proneneſs to cenſure, as makes them leſs ac-

acceptable and uſeful in their ſociety, and deprives them of many opportunities of doing good to others.

I can but name theſe particulars; each of them would deſerve to be more largely inſiſted upon, as being ſo very ſuitable and neceſſary for us of this place. But *I ſpeak to wiſe men*, and am loath any further to treſpaſs upon your patience: So then the ſubſtance of what has been ſaid is this, That ſociety being ſo neceſſary to humane nature, and the advantage or prejudice ſo very great as to our well or ill being, according to our choice of ſuch friends with whom we do moſt familiarly converſe, Therefore will it concern men to be very cautious and wary in this Matter.

And if they would render themſelves uſeful and acceptable to others, it muſt be by being wiſe and virtuous and religious perſons. Thoſe only who are good in themſelves being capable of doing good to others.

The End of the Eighth Sermon.

The Ninth Sermon.

Eccles. IV. 9.

Two are better than one.

THough the general design of this Book be sufficiently plain and obvious, being a discourse from the most profound Principles of Reason and Philosophy, *de summo bono*; yet 'tis not easie to find out the particular connexion in many parts of it.

In the eighth *verse* of this *Chapter*, the *Wiseman* enters upon a description of the miseries of a covetous life, which he sets forth under these three considerations. 1. His *drudgery* and excessive toyl, because *there is no end of his labour; neither is his eyes satisfied with riches* A very proper expression that, concerning *satisfying the eye*; that being the only enjoyment that a *miser* hath of his estate,

namely, that he can look upon it as his own; and no wonder if his labour be endleſs, if he muſt ſtill drudge on till he have got enough to *ſatisfie his eye.* 2. His *inconſiderateneſs*, in that he doth *bereave his ſoul of good*, that is, deprive himſelf of the benefit which he might have in a cheerful fruition of his poſſeſſions; and yet he asks not *for whom do I labour?* that is, he doth not diſpoſe them to any end; he neither uſes them himſelf while he lives, nor knows who ſhall enjoy them when he dies. 3. *His ſolitarineſs: There is one alone, there is not a ſecond, yea, he hath neither child nor brother*; that is, he is a forlorn friendleſs man, without the benefit and help of ſociety. Which kind of miſery the *Wiſeman* takes pains to ſet forth, by commending the contrary, ſhewing the advantage and convenience of a ſociable life; which is firſt *generally* aſſerted in the words of the *Text*, *Two are better than one:* Then *particularly* illuſtrated by ſome common inſtances, to ſhew the advantage of ſociety, both to the attaining of good, and the preventing and avoiding of evil. There is in ſuch a condition, *mutual gain*; men rid more work when joyned in ſociety, and ſo in-

increase their reward, *v.* 9. *mutual help* in their *infirmities*, *lifting one another when they fall*, v. 10. In their *defects* and *wants*, warning one another, *v.* 11. in their *dangers*, in respect of enemies, whom an united strength may more effectually withstand, *v.* 12.

The words of the *Text* are for the *scope* and *matter* intended to assert the advantages of friendship and a sociable life. For the *manner* of them, they are in figurative expressions; the force of which I shall endeavour to explain both *Negatively*, and *Positively*.

1. *Negatively:* 1. By *two* is not meant any kind of multitude; there may be too much of this, as well as too little. No where is there less enjoyment of a mans self than when a man is oppressed with clients and visitants.

And according to this construction the Words should be inverted, and we might truly say *One* were better than *Two*, retiredness than multitude. Again, by *Two* is not meant any kind of society or friends: Not companions in iniquity, as were *Simeon* and *Levi*, this is rather a *conspiracy* than a *company*; and though such do *associate themselves*, *yet they shall be broken in pieces*, *Isa.* 8. 9. *Though they*

joyn

joyn hand in hand, yet they ſhall not go unpuniſhed, Prov. 11. 21. 2. By *One* is not meant any kind of ſolitude or privacy; not ſuch as is oppoſed to that hurry of buſineſs which men in publick imployments are expoſed unto: Thoſe continual buſtles and imbroilments, whereby a man is hindred from retiring into or being acquainted with himſelf. For according to this conſtruction, the words ſhould be inverted, and we might ſay *One* were better than *Two*, privacy and retirement than multitude and tumult: Again by *One* here, we are not to underſtand *unity*, and by *Two* *diviſion*, as thoſe expreſſions do ſometimes ſignifie: For *unity* is much better than *diviſion*; upon which account the *Pythagorean* Philoſophers, amongſt their other myſtical traditions concerning numbers, were wont to ſet a note of infamy upon the number *Two*, becauſe it was the *firſt departure from unity*.

Acts 7. 26.

2. *Poſitively*: 1. By *Two* is meant ſuch as have the mutual help and benefit of one another, being linked together in the bonds of friendſhip; among whom thoſe are eſpecially to be comprehended who are joyned by that nearer and more ſacred union of *Mar-*

riage.

riage. 2. By *One* is meant such an one as lives in a forlorn desolate condition, neiher loving any, nor being loved by any but himself; without the privilege of a friend to assist his labours, settle his fears, ease his griefs, and augment his comforts. So that the true meaning of the words may be comprehended in this *Proposition.*

That the sociable life of a friend is much more advantageous than to live alone. 'Tis a principle this, that hath so clear evidence for it in the very light of nature, that it might be needless to urge for it any Scripture-authority. Prop.

'Tis upon this ground that the Philosopher doth describe a man to be ζῶον πολίτικον, a *sociable creature*, as if this did belong to the essence, and were one of the properties of humane nature.

Adam himself in the state of innocence could not be happy (though in Paradise) without a companion. Not to mention any thing of that tremendous mystery of the *Trinity* of Persons in the *Unity* of the Godhead.

As for that imaginary *Wiseman* of the *Stoicks* whom they suppose to be clapt up in some dark dungeon, lost in some desolate Island, yet then he shall enjoy such

ſuch a kind of happineſs as God himſelf would do if the the world were deſtroyed, *acquieſcit ſibi, cogitationibus ſuis traditus — in ſe reconditur, ſecum eſt:* Beſides, that this is but boaſting, and an imaginary *Idea* of ſuch a ſtate of perfection as no man perhaps ever did, or ſhall attain unto. They themſelves do likewiſe acknowledge, that though their *Wiſeman* be *ſeipſo contentus*, yet *mavult amicum. Though he may make ſome ſhift without a friend, yet he had much rather have one*; and therefore blame ſuch, *qui ſapientem intra cutem ſuam cogunt*, who would deny him this privilege, and confine him to himſelf.

There are *three* things of great conſequence to the comfort and ſaftey of life. 1. *The rectifying of our judgments.* 2. *The regulating and compoſing of our paſſions.* 3. *The aſſiſtance of our labours.* Now the ſociable life of a friend will be very advantageous in all theſe reſpects.

1. For *the rectifying of our judgments*; that we may have a true notion of things and buſineſs, and be able to judge what is moſt fit and expedient in ſeveral caſes and circumſtances. There are two general defects which the underſtandings of men are liable unto. *Confuſion* and *Error.* 1. *Con-*

1. *Confuſion*; when our minds are overwhelmed with tumultuous thoughts for want of being methodized and digeſted by the relation of them. A man will be apt to run away with vain *Chimæra's*, with weak and flat projects, whilſt they remain meerly in ſpeculation and in thoughts; whereas when they are put into words in our relation of them to others, the weakneſs and defects of them will preſently appear. So that a man had better (ſaith a *Noble Author*) diſcourſe *to a ſtatue or picture; than ſuffer his thoughts to paſs in a ſmother.* So that herein lies one ſpecial advantage of friendſhip, that a man hath the liberty of communicating his ſecret thoughts, and thereby clearing them up to himſelf.

2. He hath hereby likewiſe the benefit of faithful counſel to direct him againſt the *error* of his thoughts. 'Tis an uſual Saying, *plus vident oculi quàm oculus; two eyes ſee more than one:* And *a ſtander-by* many times diſcerns that which a better *gameſter* overlooks. Men are uſually very partial in judging of things wherein they are concerned, according to their inclinations and intereſts; apt to gloſs them over with ſuch

ſuch appearances as may beſt ſute with their own advantage; and therefore in ſuch caſes they have need of the help of others. No wiſe man will in a buſineſs of moment truſt to the advice of a flatterer, becauſe ſuch an one will be ſure to tell him what will pleaſe rather than what will profit; why, for the ſame reaſon neither ſhould he truſt to himſelf in ſuch caſes, for *Maximus quiſque adulator ſibi, every man naturally is his own greateſt flatterer:* Nor will a Stranger be fit for this work of counſel, becauſe ſuch an one may not know the whole ſtate of our buſineſſes, the *ſeries* and circumſtances of our affairs: Or if he do, yet we can have no ſecurity of ſuch an one's faithfulneſs, but that he may be apt to warp and bend his counſels for his own private ends. 'Tis true indeed, Books will give impartial counſel, without flattery or ſelf-ſeeking: But there may be theſe inconveniences in ſuch counſel; that 'tis not like to be ſo ſuitable to our particular occaſions, in all the various circumſtances of them; nor ſo lively and efficacious as to the operation of it. And though good Books may in ſome ſenſe be ſaid to be good friends and

coun-

counsellors, yet they are dead ones; whereas the advice of a faithful friend hath in it a remedy against all these inconveniences; Such an one will neither flatter us, nor serve his own ends; His wisdom and fidelity will be ready *to help us up when we fall*, v. 10. and to *warm* us with vigor when we are slack and remiss, *v.* 11.

2. Hence likewise in the *second* place may we expect the best help *for the regulating and composing of our passions.* That which for the most part proves the greatest disturbance to the peace and quiet of our lives, is from the disorders and vicissitudes of our passions, whereby the mind is kept continually out of frame. What betwixt the frenzy of anger, the ague of hopes and fears, the feaver of love, the consumption of envy, our minds are kept in a continual disease and distemper. So that whatever will conduce to the preserving of these in a composedness and harmony, must needs be of great consequence to our well-fare: And the society of a friend may be very proper and effectual to this purpose; not only for the liberty we have hereby of breathing out our secret troubles, preventing

ing that inward reſtraint and ſuffocation whereby they would be multiplied, and by his counſel (which I mentioned before;) but upon this account likewiſe, that ſuch an one will help to bear a part with us, and ſo lighten us of our burden by his compaſſion, and ſo the leſs will come to our ſhares.

The *Paſſions* may be diſtinguiſhed into *two* kinds; ſuch as are more *violent*, troubleſome and unnatural, referring to *evil*; as *Anger*, *Fear*, *Grief*, &c. Others more *kindly* and natural, relating to that which is *good*, and conſequently have a greater agreeableneſs to our deſires; as *Love*, *Hope*, *Joy*, &c. Now the *firſt* of theſe are by the help of a friend abated and weakened, the *other* ſtrengthened and confirmed, and *both* ways our quiet much promoted. And the reaſon of this difference is founded in nature: *Union ſtrengthens any thing that is natural, and weakens all violent impreſſions.* That which adds to the vigor of any living Creature, doth both fit it for its natural operations, and likewiſe to repel any præternatural injury or violence. Thus likewiſe is it in thoſe things which concern the mind; the union of a friend doth help

to

to strengthen us in matters agreeable to our natures, and to weaken those which are repugnant. We *divide* to a friend our griefs, and so *diminish* them; we *communicate* our joys, and so *increase* them.

3. The sociable life of a friend is likewise advantageous to us, *for the assistance of us in our labours*; in respect of those many hazards and difficulties we shall meet with in our several imployments; we may by this help be carried on, 1. With greater *safety and confidence*. 2. With greater *cheerfulness and vigor*. 3. With greater *success and advantage*; and that both in *secular* and *spiritual* affairs.

1. With greater *safety and confidence*: Which the *Wiseman* doth take particular notice of in this place, under a *twofold* instance. 1. Of *two travelling together*, and *if one of them fall, the other will lift him up; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him*; that is, if there be any evil which befalls a solitary helpless person, he may irrecoverably sink under it, whereas another man will find support and relief from the help of a friend. 2. Of *two contending together*;

that oppoſition which may be too ſtrong for one, may be withſtood and overcome by two. Which was the conſideration wherewith *Joab* and his Brother *Abiſhai* did encourage one another, 2. *Sam.* 10. 11. *If the Syrians be too ſtrong for me, then thou ſhalt help me; but if the Ammonites be too ſtrong for thee, then will I come and help thee.* Whereas thoſe that live without this mutual entercourſe of friendly offices, muſt be ſingly expoſed to all kind of hazards. The ſtrongeſt guards are but weak protections, in compariſon to love and friendſhip: *Ab ipſis armis inter arma periculum eſt.* Thoſe very arms which ſhould defend us and be for our ſaftey, may be turned againſt us and prove our ruine.

Non ſic excubiæ, nec circumſtantia tela,
Quàm tutatur amor — ſaith *Claudian.*

And 'tis true this, in reſpect of *ſpiritual* affairs as well as *civil*; we may proceed in our duties with greater ſafety upon this account. Solitarineſs is a time of advantage for *Satans* temptations. He ſet upon *Eve* when alone, and our *Saviour* when in the deſart: This

This tempts the tempter; *Omnia nobis mala solitudo persuadet*, saith *Seneca*: Nothing so mischievous but this may be a temptation unto. 'Tis an old saying, He that gives himself up to solitude, must be *aut Deus aut Dæmon*, either he must have a self-sufficiency as *God*, or else *Satan* will make him as bad as himself. We are dependant creatures, and shall always in this world stand in need of mutual help from one another.

2. This will help to carry us on with *greater cheerfulness and vivacity in our business*. Society and mutual encouragement, will deceive the tediousness of our labour, and cheer us up against all the troubles and oppositions we meet with. 'Tis one of the main ends of friendship, this, to stand by and comfort a man when he is in distress. 'Twas the custom of ancient times, for friends to meet together for this very purpose; which was the occasion of the visit which *Job*'s friends made to him, in the time of his affliction. *A friend is made for adversity*, saith the *Wiseman*. 'Tis no difficult matter for a man to be full of zeal and affection, whilst all things are well,

and prosperous, and there is no temptation to the contray; but,

Ovid de Trist. lib. 5. el. 15.

Cùm Deus intonuit, non se subducere nimbo,
Id demùm est pietas, id socialis amor.

we are to expect from others, who do not stand in the relation of friends, that they should not own us in our troubles, but estrange themselves from us, lest they likewise should partake of our misery. Like an herd of Deer, who will push away any of their fellows that is wounded. But he that is a real friend, will then take occasion to manifest his fidelity: Upon which account it is that the privilege of friendship hath been always esteemed one of the greatest comforts of life. *How pleasant is it for brethren to live together in unity!* Psal. 133. 1. As *Oyntment and perfumes rejoyce the heart, so doth the sweetness of a mans friend*, Prov. 27. 9. And for the same reason is it, that the loss of such Relations is to be esteemed as one of the greatest afflictions that we are capable of; losing a part of our selves, which cannot be without much pain and grief. Which made *David* so bemoan the death of his friend

friend *Jonathan* in those pathetical complaints; *I am distressed for thee, my Brother* Jonathan, *very pleasant hast thou been unto me, thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women*, 2 Sam. 1. 26.

'Tis so likewise as to our spiritual conditions, the society of Christian friends being one main branch of the *Communion of Saints*. Which is, next to the favour of God and the comfort of a good conscience, the greatest privilege we enjoy on this side of heaven. Besides their good examples, we have likewise their counsel and their comforts to direct and support us in the performances of our duty: And this is the work of an *Angel*, nay of *God himself*, the Son being styled the *Councellor*, *Isa.* 9. 6. And the Holy Ghost the *Comforter*: So that by this means, one friend may be as an *Angel*, *nay as God to another*. Our *Saviour* himself, though he were all-sufficient, yet when he was in his agony, thought fit to make use of the comfort of an Angel. And as for the power of such to excite us unto duty, the *Wiseman* hath well expressed it, *Prov.* 27. 17. *As Iron sharpens Iron, so doth a man his friend*: Upon which account the *Apostle* *Luke* 22. 43.

exhorts *to consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works, exhorting one another*, Heb. 10 24, 25.

3. This will much *promote the success of our labours*, and procure for us a better reward, in the *verse* of the Text. When several heads and hands joyn together in mutual fellowship, their affairs are managed with greater wisdom, and end with better success: *Vis unita fortior.* And this is more peculiarly true in spiritual services. Though God doth always hear men when we pray to him in secret and alone, yet he hath promised that *when two or three are gathered together in his name, he will*, after a more especial manner, *be in the midst of them*; which made St. *Paul* so earnestly desire the prayers of the *Romans*, συναγωνίζασθαι, that they might *wrestle together with him*, Rom. 15. 30. and so more effectually prevail. 'Twas for this reason that our *Saviour* sent out his disciples *two by two*, that so they might more successfully advantage one another in the work of their ministry. You know the story of King *Joash*, how he prospered in all his affairs during the life of his good friend *Jehoiada*; but after his death, he revolted to Idolatry,

Idolatry, and with an ungrateful cruelty slew the Son of *Jehoiada* for reproving his apostacy; after which nothing prospered with him, but having been first spoiled by the *Syrians*, he was *slain by his own servants*, 1 Chron. 24. From all which the truth of the *Proposition* may sufficiently appear, *that the sociable life of a friend is in many respects much more advantageous than to live alone.*

1. For the *Application* of this; it may in the first place serve to convince such as pretend to this relation, of the obligation they are under to observe those mutual offices of friendship towards one another; of counselling them in their difficulties, bearing a share with them in their several conditions, rejoycing with them in their joys, and grieving with them in their griefs; assisting them in their labours: Without which all the professions of love and service, are but words of course that vanish into air, and signify nothing. Nay those near Relations of *Parent*, and *Child*, and *Brother*, and which is nearer, for which a man is to forsake all other, that conjugal relation of *Husband* and *Wife*, are only valuable

upon this account, as they are *friends*, and without this they are but empty names, *Deut.* 13. 6. *If thy Brother, the Son of thy Mother, or the Son of thy Daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend that is as thy own soul.* This last is the highest step in the gradation: All the other relations continue, though mixed with unkindness, but this last implies dearness in the very essence of it; and is altogether inseparable from it. A man may be a *Father, Son, Husband*, and without loving, but 'tis not possible for him to be a *friend* without love and friendship.

2. And that we may be thus mutually helpful, to such as we profess friendship to, we should labour for those due qualifications requisite to such a condition. Of these I shall reckon *four*.

1. There must be *true love*, which is styled the *bond of perfection*, σύνδεσμος τελειότητος, *Colos.* 3. 14. The only bond that can make a perfect union. As two pieces of Iron will never be perfectly hammered together, unless they are both red hot; so neither will two minds be joyned together in such an helpful union, unless they are both warmed with the same heats of affection

fection. That kind of amity which is founded wholly upon private ends, *negotiatio est, non amicitia*, it is *traffick* but not *friendship*.

2. A *wise freedom*, not to conceal any thing that may be beneficial, though it may prove distasteful. *An profecturus sim nescio, malum successum mihi, quàm fidem deesse.* When we are uncertain of the issue of our admonitions, yet this we may be sure of, that *'tis better to be without success on his part, than fidelity on our own.*

3. *Patience: Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go*, Prov. 22. 24. *Short spirited men*, are neither good *Counsellors* nor *Comforters*. God is said προσωφορεῖν, to suffer and *bear long with the manners* of his people in the wilderness, *Acts* 13. 18. And the *Apostle* injoyns men to possess their souls in patience. Implying, that he that is out of patience, is out of the possession of his own soul; and therefore will not be fit to take care of another's.

4. *Constancy*, to hold out in all states and conditions, without deserting him in trouble. To forsake a friend in his distress, argues a man to have much baseness

baſeneſs and meaneſs of ſpirit, and to be without all true generoſity. The carriage of the Witch of *Endor* towards *Saul* will caſt ſhame upon ſuch unworthy perſons: Though ſhe was ſure that he was the next day to loſe his kingdom and be ſlain with his Sons, and ſo could neither hope for good, nor fear any hurt from him; yet when ſhe ſaw him exceedingly dejected, lying upon the ground, and refuſing to eat, the remembrance of what he had been impreſſes upon her ſuch a reverence, that inſtead of meditating revenge for the law he had enacted againſt perſons of her Trade, ſhe courts him with all the humble and
1 *Sam.* 28. reſpective language that may be; endeavours to cheer him up, beſpeaks him to eat, kills for him her fatted calf; beſtirs her ſelf to prepare unleavened bread, and uſes him with as much reſpect as if he had been ſtill to continue in his moſt flouriſhing eſtate. The example of this Witch may be a juſt condemnation and reproach to the perfidiouſneſs of an unconſtant friend.

But above all other kinds of friendſhip, this of the *Conjugal Relation* doth moſt

most firmly oblige to these mutual duties. And because the occasion of this present Meeting is to commemorate a solemnity of this nature, which was celebrated in this *Church* this day was 16 years, the happiness of which hath since that time been still continued with all the blessings of domestical love and peace, besides the comforts of a hopeful posterity to succeed; therefore in order to the present occasion, the better to excite your gratitude for the mercies you commemorate, I would offer it to your consideration to look abroad into the World, and take a view of the state of many other great Families; how uncomfortably they live by reason of domestical dissentions, which sometimes rise to that height as to make a separation of those whom God hath joyned, to their mutual dishonour and discomfort: And perhaps either no posterity to continue the name, or such a vicious and debauched one, as will be a scandal to it. They that understand the state of things abroad, will find no great scarcity of examples to this purpose. And therefore how great reason have others to be thankful for their exemption in these respects?

God's

God's peculiar bleſſing of any in relation, is a farther obligation upon them to ſerve him in the duties of that relation, which are in this caſe either *ſpecial to Husband* and *Wife*, or *joynt* and common to both.

1. *Husbands* ſhould *love their Wives as Chriſt loves his Church*, Epheſ. 5. 25. Or *as they love their own ſelves*, v. 33.

2. Be *kind to them*, v. 29. *Not harſh and bitter againſt them*, Coloſ. 3. 19. Leſt *ſhe cover the Altar of the Lord with her tears, ſo that he will not regard thy offering any more, nor receive it with good will at thy hand*, Malach. 2. 13, 14.

3. *Give honour to them as the weaker veſſels, as being heirs with you of the grace of life*, 1 Pet. 3. 7. Being tender of diſpleaſing or diſatisfying them by any imprudent action, or ſeeming neglect. *Let her be unto thee as the loving Hinde, or the tender Roe, and be thou always ſatisfied with her love.*

The *Wife muſt*,

1. *Be ſubject to her Husband as to the Lord*, Epheſ. 5. 22. *This is meet and comely*, Coloſ. 3. 18. *For after this manner the holy women of old time, that truſted in God, were in ſubjection to their husbands*, 1 Pet. 3. 5. Which was ſignified

fied by their *heads covered*, 1 Cor. 11. 10. They must not *usurp authority over the man*, 1 Tim. 2. 12. This would *give occasion for the word of God to be blasphemed*, Titus 2. 5.

2. To *reverence them*, 1 Pet. 3. 6. And out of an awful regard to take care of pleasing them, *She that is married takes care to please her own husband*, 1 Cor. 7. 34.

3. To be of *meek* and sober spirits, placing their chiefest *ornament in good works, as becometh women professing godliness*, 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10. Either *keeping silence*, v. 11. or *speaking with wisdom*, having *the law of kindness in her lips*, Prov. 31. 26.

The *joint* Duties common to both are:

1. *To be mutual helps*: Which was the end of this ordinance, *Gen.* 2. 18. participating in one another's cares and concernments; This the very name imports, they are σύζυγοι, *conjuges*, *draw in the same yoke*, and therefore should partake of the same burden and benefit.

2. In the *educating of their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; being instrumental for their regeneration,

tion, continually exciting them to love of things that are truly virtuous and noble, and to a diſlike and averſation of all ſuch matters, as are ſinful and unworthy, going before them in the example of a good life: They ſhould *whet the law upon them*, as the word ſignifies, *Deut.* 6. 7. that is, inculcate it, going it over and over again, as men do when they whet a thing; the firſt impreſſions are like to abide longeſt. To pray for them; *Job* offered a ſacrifice for each of his Children: *Not to provoke them to wrath*, Epheſ. 6. 4. *leſt they be diſcouraged*, Coloſ. 3. 21. Uſing ſuch a mixture of kindneſs and lenity in the exerciſe of parental authority, as may excite a filial awe mixed of love and fear.

3. In *the government of the whole family.* If God have bleſſed you in theſe relations, you ſhall take up *Joſhua*'s reſolution, *I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord*, ſetting up his fear and worſhip in your families.

This is the beſt way to expreſs your gratitude for mercies paſt, and will be the ſureſt means to continue and ſecure them for the future.

And

And if a blessing from this place, this *Mount of blessing*, from the mouth and heart of him who had the happiness first to joyn your hands, may be efficacious, I shall close up all with this Benediction.

The Lord bless you, and lift up the light of his countenance upon you: Continue you in mutual love and peace, and give you to see the desire of your souls upon your posterity; that after many days of mutual comfort here, you may in a good old age be gathered to your Fathers, and that your Children after you *may rise up and call you blessed*, for your love and care of them in a virtuous and Christian education.

The End of the Ninth Sermon.

The

The Tenth Sermon.

At the Spittle *EaſterWedneſday*, 1663.

Isaiah XXXII. 8.

The liberal deviſeth liberal things; and by liberal things ſhall he ſtand.

IN the former part of this *Chapter*, we have a prophetical deſcription of the happy ſtate of the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation under the reign of King *Hezekiah*, who was in this reſpect a type of *Chriſt*, as to his government in the times of the *Goſpel*.

And whereas the former ſtate of things, was under many wild confuſions, by reaſon of *violence* in the *governours*, and ſlaviſh *flattery* and *ignorance* in the *people*, they ſhould now be reſtored unto a due order and *decorum*.

That this Prince ſhould by the juſtice of his Government afford a *ſecurity* and *refuge* againſt that general irregularity and *oppreſſion*, which had before abounded: And after his delivery from *Sennacherib*, and recovery from ſickneſs, ſhould effectually apply himſelf to the regulating of all publick violence and diſorder in Government; which are here metaphorically deſcribed by thoſe inconveniences of Weather to which the inhabitants of that Country were moſt liable, winds, and tempeſts, and drought, and heats. *He ſhall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt; as ſtreams of water in a dry place, as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land*, v. 2.

2. And as for that groſs *ignorance* and ſervile *flattery*, which this people had before been guilty of, in ſtiling evil good, and vile perſons by honourable names, this ſhould now be rectified; *Their eyes ſhall not be dim, and they ſhall underſtand knowledge*, v. 3, 4. *The vile perſon ſhall no more be called liberal, nor the churl ſaid to be bountiful*, v. 5. Such kind of perſons ſhall not any longer be in repute and eſteem;

esteem; men shall not either by mistake or flattery, sooth up others in their vices. That which we translate *vile*, is elsewhere rendred *foolish*: *Nabal* נבל, 1 Sam. 25. 25. *Nabal is his name, and folly is with him*; but being here opposed to *liberal*, it may signify a foolish niggard, not without some allusion to the story of *Nabal*, whose name might in those days be used as a by-word. In the original there is an elegant *paranomasia*: *Nabal* shall not be *Nadib*. Though their *names* be somewhat *near*, yet their *natures* are vastly *distant*: Because such vile persons will both *speak* and *contrive* and *practise* vile, disingenuous, false, unworthy things, *v.* 6, 7. Whereas on the contrary, *the liberal deviseth liberal things*, &c.

That's the scope of the place, and the connexion of the words: In them we have these *three* parts or *terms* to be explained.

1. The *subject*, or person spoken of, *the liberal man.*

2. The *property* ascribed to him, *deviseth liberal things.*

3. The *benefit* or advantage promised to it, *and by liberal things shall he stand.*

1. For the *subject*, or person spoken of; the *liberal* נדיב: The *vulgar* translates it, the *Prince*; the LXX. and the *Arabick*, the *Religious*; the *Syriac*, the *Great* man. The original *verb* signifies properly to give with a ready willing mind, voluntariness, freeness, generosity, largeness of heart, a cheerful, bountiful giver. 'Tis frequently used in Scripture for a *Prince*, or a *Lord*, because such kind of persons are by their conditions more peculiarly obliged to be so: answerable to the *Greek* εὐεργέτης, which we translate *benefactor*, *Luke* 22. 25. And equivalent to those *English* phrases, *a man of honour*, *a generous person*, one that is *truly noble and worthy*, of a free ingenuous spirit, without any tincture of servility or baseness. In opposition to a narrow, abject, sordid mind.

Exod. 25.2. 6.35.5,22. *Psal.* 110. 3. *Prov.* 17.7. *Psal.* 118. 9.

2. The property ascribed to this liberal person: He *deviseth liberal things*; wherein there is an *Act* and *Object*.

1. The *Act*, he deviseth, יעץ. *Consulit*, *meditatur*; the bent and inclination of his mind is set this way; his thoughts are continually working upon it. The word may denote *two* things: Either

Either *serious deliberation* about it, or *readiness of mind* to it,

I. *Serious deliberation about it*; he *deviseth*, that is, he employs his most serious thoughts in this business, consulting and contriving in his mind the most proper and effectual ways for it: This is stiled, *v.* 6. The *working of the heart*; speaking of the vile person, his *heart doth work iniquity*. And 'tis elsewhere said of the wicked, that *he deviseth mischief upon his bed, and sets himself in a way that is not good.* The expression doth denote a purposed application of the thoughts, when men are studious and inquisitive how to effect and contrive things to the best advantage. *Psal.* 36. 4.

II. *Readiness* and spontaneity; such an one doth not stay till he be provoked or necessitated by others to such kind of works, but doth of his own mind cast about in his thoughts, how to find the most fitting objects for them. It hath been a Proverbial saying, that *Liberalitas non facit syllogismum*, Liberality doth not stay to argue and debate, when a proper and fitting occasion is offered, but upon the first suggestion doth most freely close and comply with it.

2. The *Object*, *liberal* things נדיבות, *ea que digna ſunt precipe*, things that are noble and generous, ſuch as become a perſon of a large and bountiful heart, ſuch things as are of the moſt comprehenſive nature, redounding to publick general benefit, and the good of Mankind. In oppoſition to thoſe *little acts* of fraud, and circumvention, and ſurprizal, mentioned before, and all thoſe *narrow* ſelfiſh deſigns, which vile perſons are addicted to.

3. The *benefit* or advantage promiſed to it: By liberal things ſhall he ſtand, יקום. The Word may ſignify to be *eſtabliſhed* (as it is rendered in the *margin*) or to *riſe*, *propter liberalitatis conſurget*. We are apt to think that theſe works of bounty, will be a means to undo a man, and bring him down in his eſtate: Which is an opinion that the *Philoſopher*, *Eth. lib.* 4. *chapt.* 1. doth expreſly own, affirming, *that a liberal man cannot grow rich.* But 'twas becauſe he was ignorant of thoſe *divine promiſes* which are made to this virtue; and had not ſufficiently conſidered the ſeveral *inſtances* to the contrary, which experience might have ſuggeſted to this purpoſe amongſt the very

very *Heathens*. Such kind of persons shall not only be *not ruined* by their bounty, but they shall hereby be *confirmed* and *advanced* in all kind of prosperity; what they bestow in this kind shall prove a *saving*, instead of *casting* away; and *he that soweth bountifully*, *shall reap bountifully*. 2 Cor. 9. 6.

So that the *Text* doth contain a *description* of this virtue of *liberality*, by its work or *property*; and a *recommendation* of it by its wages, or the blessing and *success* that belongs to it.

'Tis a noble subject, and very proper for the present Solemnity. And if the plainest evidence from *Scripture*, or the clearest deductions of *reason* may be of any force, I doubt not but to propose such considerations about it, as to men that will attend and consider, shall either convince them, and win them over to their duties, or leave them inexcusable.

In the prosecution of this subject, I shall observe this plain method.

1. Endeavour to shew the *nature* of this Virtue; what it is, and wherein it consists.

2. To prove the *neceſſity* of it, or the grounds of our obligation to it, from *Scripture* and *Reaſon*; and then,

3. To apply it to our ſelves by ſome uſeful Inference.

I. In treating concerning the *firſt* of theſe, the *nature* of this Virtue, I ſhall ſpeak briefly to theſe *four* heads: 1. The ſeveral *Names* of this Virtue. 2. The *Nature* of it. 3. The *Qualifications* of it, and *Oppoſites* to it.

1. For the ſeveral *Names* whereby 'tis deſcribed. There are two *Hebrew* words for it נדיב and שוע, both of them mentioned, *v.* 5. and they do each of them ſignify nobility and dignity, becauſe this Virtue is ſo in it ſelf, and 'tis eſſential to ſuch as deſerve to be ſo eſteemed; anſwerable to thoſe *Engliſh* words uſed to this purpoſe, *Nobleneſs* and *Generoſity*: The *Greek* ἐλευθεριότης; and *Latin*, *liberalitas*, from whence the *Engliſh* is derived, do import an ingenuous freedom in oppoſition to ſervility and baſeneſs.

The periphraſtical deſcriptions of it, are ſuch as theſe, *Opening our hands wide*, Deut. 15. 8. *Drawing out our ſouls*, Iſa. 58. 10. *Diſperſing abroad*, 2 Cor. 9. 9. Being *enriched in every thing*

thing to all bountifulness, 2 Cor. 9. 11. To be *rich in good works*, *ready to distribute*, *willing to communicate*, 1 Tim. 6. 18.

2. For the *Nature* of it; 'tis described by the *Philosopher* to be, περὶ χρήματα μεσότης, a virtuous mediocrity in the right use of our wealth, directing a man to a due measure, both in the *acquiring* and *keeping* of his estate, but chiefly in *giving* and disposing of it upon fitting occasions: Or, 'tis a virtuous habit, whereby we are enabled and inclined to relieve the want, and promote the welfare of others, in such cases where we are not obliged by humane Laws. In persons of large and princely estates, and in works of splendidness and grandeur, 'tis stiled by the name of *magnificence*; which differs only *gradually* from it: Being extended to persons in a state of suffering and *misery*, 'tis stiled *mercy* or pity. To persons in a condition of *want*, 'tis stiled *Alms* or Charity: Being each of them the same thing for *kind* and substance, and diversified only by the *subjects* and *objects*.

3. The

3. The *Qualifications* or condition required to the due exercise of it, which are chiefly *four.*

1. *Willingness:* 2. *Freeness:* 3. *Readiness*, for the *manner*; 4. *Largeness* for the *measure*; in opposition to *Grudging*, *Mercenariness*, *Delay*, *Sparingness*.

1. It must be done *willingly*, with spontaneity, προθυμία, with *forwardness of mind*, 2 Cor. 9. 2. Not *grudgingly*, but chearfully, *v.* 7. *Thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest to thy brother*, Deut. 15 10. *Sic des, quemadmodum velles accipere.* Prevent being asked, which will exceedingly enlarge a kindness: *Non tulit gratis, qui cum rogasset accepit:* An ingenuous man may pay dear for a kindness, when he is put to buy it with solicitation. An unjust Judge may be prevailed upon with importunity: *David* doth with a kind of triumphant joy celebrate the temper of his people in *offering so willingly* their contributions towards the Temple; he looks upon it as such an excellent disposition, as was both acceptable to God, and approved of men, such, as was an honour to the Nation and which God did highly esteem.

2 Cor. 8. 12.

2 Chron 29 17, 18.

2. I

2. It must be done *Freely*, without expecting reward, *Luke* 6. 35. *Do good——expecting nothing again; freely you have received, freely give.* He that is liberal upon design, may be stiled *mercenary.* Such kind of gifts are not *benevolence*, but a *bargain*; not a *dole*, but a *bait*: *Mittit in hamo*; *Venatio est non donatio*, saith St. *Hierom.* That's a remarkable place, *Prov.* 22. 16. *He that oppresseth the poor to encrease his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.* 'Tis observable there, that giving to the rich, is coupled with oppressing the poor; both of them arising from the same kind of temper in men, and designing the same end, as being alike thought sure ways to encrease our wealth, but the issue will be, that such shall *surely want.* There is another apposite Text to this purpose, *Luke* 14. 12. *When thou makest a dinner, call not thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and so a recompence be made thee.* One would think there should be no great hazard in that; and yet 'tis mentioned as a dangerous thing, which men ought carefully to avoid, as being likely upon another account to redound to our loss

and

and prejudice, by hindering our bette
recompences *at the reſurrection of th*
juſt, v. 14.

3. It muſt be done *readily*, withou
delay: If that ſaying be true, tha
bis dat qui citò; then he doth but ha
give, who gives ſlowly: *Say not t*
thy neighbour, Go and come again, an
to morrow I will give thee, when tho
haſt it by thee, Prov. 3. 28. *Tantu*
gratiæ demis, quantum moræ adjicis, W
are apt our ſelves to be very impatien
in our deſires, when we are unde
any want or exigence, and to ſay with
Pſal. 69, 17. 143, 7. *David, Make haſte, O Lord, to help me*
I am in trouble, O hear me ſpeedily, for
my ſpirit faileth. And 'tis but reaſon
that we ſhould be willing to do as we
would be done unto.

4. Beſides theſe ſeveral qualificati-
ons for the *manner*, it muſt likewiſe be
done *freely* and *liberally* for the *meaſure*;
according to our ſeveral abilities, *open-*
ing our hands wide, and ſowing bountifully.
2 Cor. 9. 6. 'Tis for a brother of low degree to
give φειδομένως, ſparingly: They that
1 Tim. 6 18. are *rich in this world*, muſt be *rich in*
good works alſo. *Goats hair* and *Badgers-*
ſkins may be a ſuitable gift for the
people, and a *mite* for a poor Widow;
but

but the rich are to give *Purple*, and *Gold*, and *Jewels*. And in this sense is that *Scripture* to be fulfilled, that *to whom much is given, of them much shall be required.* Exod. 35.

4. The *Opposites* to it; which (as of all other moral virtues) are of two kinds, *redundant*, *deficient*; *and Prosuseness*, and *Covetousness*.

Whereas there is a twofold Office of liberality, namely, to direct us in a due measure in *getting* or *keeping*, and in *spending* or *giving*. The *Prodigal* is *excessive* in the *latter*, and *defective* in the *former*: on the contrary, the *Covetous* is *excessive* in the former, and *defective* in the latter.

1. The *exceeding* extreme is stiled *Prodigality*, prosuseness, riotousness, which observes neither the due manner nor measure in keeping, or giving. It hath this peculiar folly belonging to it, that it takes care to destroy it self: *Quid stultius* (saith *Cicero*) *quam quod libentur facias, curare ut id diutiùs facere non possis.*

2. The *deficient* extream is churlishness, tenacity, *shutting up the bowels of compassion*, being *greedy of filthy lucre.* 1 Tim 3.3. It hath these particular characters given to

to it in Scripture; 'tis a kind of *Idol*try, inconsistent with Religion, *No man can serve God and Mammon.* He that *loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him:* 'Tis *the root of all evil*, *leading men into temptations and snares into many foolish and noysome lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction.* 'Tis *hateful to men*, amongst whom it will render a person vile and contemptible: and 'tis *abominable to God*, *the covetous whom God abhorreth.* Psal. 10. 3.

1 Tim. 6. 5,6,9,10.

II. I proceed to the *second* head, the *necessity* of it, or the grounds of our obligation to it from *Scripture* and *Reason.*

The *Scripture* proofs to this purpose I shall reduce under these *four* heads. 1. The *Precepts* for it. 2. The *Commendations* of it. 3. The *Promises* made to it. 4. The *Threats* and *Judgments* denounced upon the neglect of it.

1. The *Precepts* for it, which are very numerous, *Deut.* 15. This duty, within a little compass, is inculcated no less than four several times, and urged with much emphaticalness: *Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand against thy poor Brother,*

v. 7.

v. 7. *But thou shalt open thy hand wide to him*, v. 8. *Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest to him*, v. 10. Therefore *I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thy hand wide to thy Brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land*, v. 11.

Eccles. 11. 1. *Cast thy bread upon the waters; give a portion to seven, and also to eight. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand.* Matth. 5. 42. *Give to him that asketh thee.* Luke 6. 33. *Do good* —— *Hoping for nothing again.* 1 Tim. 6. 18. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.* Titus 3. 8. *This I will, that thou affirm constantly, That those who believe in God, be careful to maintain good works.* These are some of the Scripture-*Commands* to this purpose, which are very plain and positive. Nor can any reasonable man doubt, but that he ought in such cases to yield obedience to him who hath the supreme dominion over us.

2. The *Commendations* of it. That which we translate a *liberal soul*, Prov. 11. 25. in the *Hebrew* is the *soul of blessing*;

bleſſing; becauſe 'tis ſo both active ly and paſſively. As the virtue c Charity is frequently celebrated fo one of the moſt excellent amongſt a the reſt, and ſet forth by many pecu liar commendations, as being *bette than ſacrifice*; *the fulfilling of the Law the bond of perfectneſs*; *the great Com mandment*; *the Royal Law*: So is *Bount* one of the top-branches of Charity

'Tis juſtly counted a privilege, whic men ought to ſeek after and rejoyc in, That they may receive good fron others. Now the Scripture tells us that '*tis more bleſſed to give, than to re ceive*, Acts 20. 35. 'Tis both the evi dence and the ornament of our Reli gion: 'Tis the chief fruit whereby w are to judge of our ſincerity. Me do vainly pretend to Faith and Re ligion, without the proof of ſuch goo works: *Obadiah* doth urge this to th *Prophet* as an evidence of his *fearin God*, that he had been careful to re lieve others in diſtreſs. And the *Cen turion* was for this reaſon ſtiled *man of worth. Pure Religion and un defiled*, is to abound in works of thi nature, *to viſit the fatherleſs and th widow*, Jam. 1.27. *The wiſdom that* fro

1 *Kings* 18.12,13.

Luke 7.5.

from above is full of mercy and good fruit, Jam. 3. 17.

The *Apostle* describes liberality to be a demeaning our selves suitably, *to our professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ*, 2 *Cor.* 9. 13. And elsewhere he styles being *fruitful in good works*, a *walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, providing things honest in the sight of all men*, 2 Cor. 8. 21. Works of bounty are in another place said to be *an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing unto God.* Coll. 1. 10. Heb. 13. 16 Phil. 4 18

The image of God doth more especially consist in this; nothing renders us so like him, as *beneficence.* We shall for this be called *the Children of the highest*, Luke 6. 35. 'Tis stiled by the name of *perfection*, Luke 6. 36. compared with *Matth.* 5. 48. By this a man is said *to honour his maker*, Prov. 14. 31. To make God a *debtor*, *Prov.* 19. 17. To feed hungry Christ, and to clothe naked Christ: And at the day of judgment, these kind of services shall have the preference before all others, men being doom'd to their eternal states according as they have been forward or negligent in these duties. And what Coloss. 3. 12. Matth. 27.

can be said more highly in the commendation of any thing?

3. The *promises* that are made to it: In the *general*, of *happiness*, *blessing*, *reward*. *He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he*, Prov. 14. 21. *He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed*, Chap. 22. 9. And God *will pay him again*, Chap. 19 17. *His reward shall be great*; *It shall be given unto him, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over*, Luke 5. 38.

In *special*; for *this life* and *that which is to come*.

1. For *this life*.

Success in our affairs: For this, *the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto*, Deut. 15. 10.

Deliverance out of trouble: If thou *draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not*, Isa. 58. 10, 11.

Tran-

Tranquility in our conditions: *Daniel* tells King *Nebuchadnezzar*, that *shewing mercy to the poor* may be a good means *to lengthen his tranquility*, Dan. 4. 27.

Plenty: He that gives to the poor shall not lack, Prov. 28. 27. *The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself*, Chap. 11. 25. With this particular difference from the wealth that is gotten by other means, that the gain which is the fruit of the promise, and proceeds from *the blessing of the Lord, doth make rich, and he adds no sorrow with it*, Prov. 10. 22.

Honour: Such an one *shall be had in everlasting remembrance*, Psal. 112. 6. *His name shall be exalted with honour*, v. 9. *Men shall rise up* at the mention of him, *and call him blessed.*

Provision for their *posterity: His seed shall be blest*, Psal. 37. 15. So as *not to beg their bread*, Psal. 25.

2. And as for *the life to come:* Men may by this means make themselves *friends of the unrighteous Mammon, which shall hereafter receive them into everlasting habitations.* Luke 16 9. They do hereby *lay up in store for themselves a good* 1 Tim. 6. 19

good foundation againſt the time to come, whereby they may lay hold on eternal life: the laſt doom and ſentence of, *Come ye bleſſed*, or *Go ye curſed*, being pronounced upon men according as their demeanour hath been in this reſpect. Matth. 25. 34.

4. The *threats* and *judgments* denounced and executed upon the neglect of it, *Prov.* 21. 13. *Whoſo ſtoppeth his ear at the cry of the poor, he alſo ſhall cry himſelf, but ſhall not be heard*, Chap. 28. 27. *He that hideth his eyes* from ſuch as need his help, *ſhall have many a curſe:* Men will curſe him in proſperity, and not pity him in adverſity. *He ſhall have judgment without mercy who hath ſhewed no mercy*, Jam. 2. 13. *With what meaſure we mete to others, it ſhall be meaſured to us again.* Which was verified in that parable of *Dives*, *Qui non dedit micam, non guſtavit guttam.* He that denied a *crumb of bread*, could not receive *a drop of water:* You know the ſentence upon that unmerciful *ſervant*, who having received great favour himſelf, would not yet ſhew any kindneſs or pity to his fellow, 'tis ſaid *his Lord was wroth with him, and delivered him to the tormentors*, Matth. 18. 34.

This

This was the occasion of that dreadful sentence of Excommunication denounced against the *Ammonites* and *Moabites*, *Deut.* 23. 34. *They shall not enter into the Congregation of the Lord for ever*, (*i. e.*) as some *Interpeters* would have it, though they should be willing to turn *Proselytes*, yet should not they be admitted, *nor shalt thou seek their peace and prosperity all thy days*; *v.* 6. And the reason was, *because they met you not with bread and water in the way when ye came forth out of Egypt.* These being the only Nations whom God had charged the *Israelites* not to fight against, *Deut.* 2. 19. And for them not to afford them any relief in their distress, had in it so much unkindness, as should set an everlasting brand of infamy upon their Nations.

One of the Reasons which brought that fearful destruction upon *Sodom* was, because she did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy, *Ezek.* 16. 49, 50.

Job had such an abhorrency against this vice, that he professeth he had rather *his arm should fall from his shoulder-blade, and his arms be broken from the bone*, than be guilty of it, *Job* 31. 16.

Prov. 11. 24. *There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.* That place ſeems to refer to ſuch as do give ſomewhat (though ſparingly); And if ſuch come to poverty, much more ſhall thoſe that give nothing at all.

I have done with the *Scripture*-proofs to this purpoſe. It cannot be but that men who do in good earneſt believe the Scriptures, muſt needs be convinced by ſuch plain evidences as theſe.

I proceed to the Arguments from *Reaſon*, which I ſhall rank under theſe three heads.

Equity,
Juſtice,
Advantage.

1. From *Equity*: The rules of fitneſs and congruity, ſuch as every one who pretends to reaſon or ingenuity, muſt ſubmit unto, do oblige us to the exerciſe of this grace. Which may be made out upon a threefold account. In reſpect of

God,
The Poor,
Our ſelves.

1. In

1. In respect of *God*, who bestows upon us all that we have, and therefore may well expect that we should be ready to lay out some of it for his use, according to his appointment. *All things come of thee, and of thine own we have given thee* (saith *David*), 1 *Chron.* 29. 14. *He renews his mercies* to us *every morning, and daily loads us with his benefits.* He *gives* to us *liberally, and upbraids* us *not. He spreads our Tables, and fills our Cups*, till they run over; that we may be more ready with our superfluities, to fill the empty, *and satisfie the hungry with our good things, that our abundance may be a supply for others wants, that there may be an equality*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 14. That passage 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. doth in every word of it contain an argument to this purpose. *He gives us all things richly to enjoy.* He *gives*; we can claim nothing as our due; *us* so unworthy; *richly*; (*i. e.* bountifully) that others might be supplied out of our store; to *enjoy*, not to hoard up or waste upon our lusts, but to dispose of to their proper end and use. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty*

ty might be made rich. 2 *Cor.* 8. 9.

And there is all imaginable equity in this conſequence, why God ſhould require this of us, having done ſo much for us. Suppoſe a man ranſomed from death, and ſlavery, and want, and put into the poſſeſſion of a great eſtate by the bounty of another; who thereupon ſhould make it his earneſt requeſt to him, that for his ſake he would ſpare ſome little of that plenty he had now conferred upon him, towards the relief of ſome friends of his, who were nearly related to him, upon whom he might have beſtowed all that wealth, which he had choſen rather to confer upon him: And ſhould adjure him to this, by all the entreaties, promiſes and repeated importunities that could be; would not Heaven and Earth cry ſhame againſt ſuch a vile ungrateful wretch, as ſhould in ſo ſmall a matter neglect ſo great an obligation? would not every mans heart riſe up with much keeneſs and indignation againſt the very mention of ſuch a monſter? But you will ſay, are there any ſuch vile wretches in the world? I anſwer, All thoſe that are rich, and not bountiful upon good occaſions, they are ſuch.

And

And if any such there be in this place, I would say to every one of them, as *Nathan* did to *David*; *Thou art the man.*

2. 'Tis equitable in respect of the *Poor*, who by reason of their relation to us, and their need of us, may reasonably expect assistance from us. God could have provided sufficiently for every one, but his providence hath so ordered it, *That there shall be always poor in the Land*, to prove us in this kind, that we might have fit matter for the exercise of this grace, and that we might have some visible examples of what he can reduce us to when he pleases. Nor are dignities or riches upon any other account desirable, but as they afford means and opportunities of doing good to such as stand in need of our help. So that the different states and degrees amongst men, as to riches and poverty, seem by the Providence of God to be purposely designed in order to the exercise of this Virtue. *Deut.* 15. 11.

3. 'Tis equitable in respect of *our selves*. We are miserable, despicable creatures, and can hope for nothing from God, but upon the account of Bounty; without his mercy we are all

of us loſt and undone. Now the rules of congruity will require, that we ſhould be as ready to ſhew mercy to others, as to expect it for our ſelves; there is no man ſo abſolute and independent, as not at ſome time to ſtand in need of the help of others; Human Society could not ſubſiſt, without the mutual offices of kindneſſes; and nothing is more ſutable to natural reaſon, than that we ſhould be ready to do as we would be done unto. That's the *firſt* argument upon the accouut of common reaſon and ingenuity.

2. This is not only equitable and fitting, and the not doing of it an incongruous, unreaſonable thing: But 'tis likewiſe *juſt*, and the omiſſion of it an *injury* or ſin. 'Tis obſerved by ſome learned *Criticks*, That in the *Hebrew*, and the reſt of the *Oriental* Tongues, this virtue of Bounty and Beneficence is ſtyled by the name of *Juſtice* or *Righteouſneſs* צדקה this being the word moſt frequently uſed for it, and is accordingly often ſo *rendred* by the *Septuagint*; in that forecited place. *Pſal.* 112. 6. *The Righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance*: Where the context will make it

it evident, that by *righteous* is meant the bountiful and charitable man. So *Psal.* 37. 12. *The wicked borroweth and payeth not again, but the righteous sheweth mercy and giveth:* And in several other places. *Prov.* 10. 2. *Psal.* 25. 26.

Though one man cannot implead another before the Bar of humane Law, for not doing him a kindness, for not being liberal to him; the end of the Law being to preserve men within the bounds of justice; to keep them from doing injuries to one another, which is more immediately necessary to the peace of Societies: Yet in God's Law, the not doing a kindness, when we have a fitting occasion, is counted *injustice*; and he will arraign us for the omission of such occasions.

The *Apostle* having said, *Rom.* 13. 7. *Render to all their dues*, pay to every man your debts; subjoyns in the next *verses*, *Owe no man any thing but to love one another*; Implying, that in the Scripture-sense, Charity is a debt, and the not paying of it an injustice. 'Tis such a debt as we can never fully discharge, but though we are always paying of it, yet we must still be in arrear, whilst there shall remain any ability,

and occaſion for our exerciſing of it.

Prov. 3. 27. *Withhold not good from him to whom it is due* (or *from the owners thereof*) ſpeaking of works of bounty. When there are fit objects propoſed to us that need our help, they have a juſt title to it; and the not aſſiſting of them, is withholding from them their due.

We are but Stewards of our eſtate and are to lay it out for ſuch uſes of the Family, as are moſt agreeable to our *Maſter's* will; and the neglect of this is ſtyled, *being unfaithful in that which is another man's.* Luke 16. 12.

God himſelf is the great Soveraign and Proprietor of the world; all men are but his Subjects and Tenants; there is a Tribute or Rent which he requires from them, upon the non-payment of which they forfeit their Tenure, and afterwards do but uſurp, being in his ſight without any lawful title to what they poſſeſs. And he hath appointed two kind of Receivers for this tribute or rent which we owe to him, his *Miniſters* and the *Poor*; the not paying to one of theſe is expreſly ſtyled, *robbing* of God *Malach.* 3. 8. 'tis ſo likewiſe in the other caſe, *Pauperibus non impertire rapina eſt.* Nay, it may prove much worſe, a kind

of

of *Murther*, which is the highest kind of injustice, Because not to save when we may, is to destroy, as is implied by our Saviour, *Luke* 6. 9. That's the *Second* Argument upon the account of *justice* or duty.

3. 'Tis highly *advantageous* to us; which is the *last* Argument upon the account of *interest*. *By liberal things shall we stand.* 'Tis the best means to improve and confirm a mans condition, in all the felicities of this life, and a better.

1. For *this life*: 'Tis the most effectual way both to improve and preserve our estates, and to render us honourable and amiable in the esteem of others.

1. For the increasing of our estates: The *Apostle* compares it to *sowing*, which refers to an *harvest*. The Husbandman would never scatter his seed upon the ground, if he did not know, that 'tis much better for him to dispose of it so, than to keep it in his granary. 'Tis of all others the most gainful way of Trading. *Ars omnium quæstuosissima*, as one of the *Fathers*. When we receive much for a little, certain for uncertain, eternal things for temporal.

2. For

2. For the preſerving it ſafe. The *Jews* call *Alms* by the name of *Salt*, for its preſerving power. 'Tis laying up treaſures in Heaven, where *ruſt cannot corrupt*, nor *thieves break through and ſteal.* Such perſons whom we help by our beneficence, are but ſo many Treaſurers whom we intruſt with the cuſtody of our wealth; who will preſerve it more ſafely for us, than any lock or guards, or any other repoſitories can do. As for that wealth which is not ſo diſpoſed of, the thief may rob our Treaſuries; the fire may devour our houſes; Creditors may grow inſolent; our grounds may become fruitleſs and barren, by reaſon of unſeaſonable weather; tempeſts may deſtroy our adventures in merchandize; ſome miſtake in our conveyances may overthrow the title of our purchaſes; every one of theſe may be ſubject to a thouſand caſualties. But,

Martial. *Extra fortunam eſt, quicqnid donatur amicis;*
Quas dederis, ſolas ſemper habebis opes.

Saith the *Epigrammatiſt.* A man can be ſure only of that wealth which he hath given away.

'Tis

'Tis storied of a great man, eminent for his bounty, that being asked by a friend what he did intend to reserve for himself, after all his bountiful gifts bestowed upon others? Answered, *ea ipsa quæ dono*: implying, that instead of alienating, he did rather confirm his propriety in them, by disposing of them to good uses. *Alphonsus.*

'Twas a significant saying to this purpose, *Habeo quod dedi, perdidi quod servavi, I do keep what I gave, but I have lost what I kept.* To which it may be added, That as these riches are not so much exposed to danger, so are they less liable to the *envy* of others.

For *Honour* and Repute, *which is better than great Riches*, 'tis said, *he that hath mercy on the poor, honoureth his maker. Prov.* 14. 31. And God hath said, *Him that honoureth me, I will honour. Every man is a friend to a man of gifts.* Nor is such an one so much a loser in his purse by his bounty, as he is a gainer in the hearts and affections of men. The *Centurion* (tho of a different way from the *Jews*) was upon this account highly valued in their esteem, which made them so earnestly to intercede with our *Saviour* in his behalf, as being a worthy *Prov.* 19.

worthy generous perſon, who had ol
liged them by his publick beneficence
and our *Saviour* did upon that reaſo
more readily comply with their deſire
upon the firſt motion. Though upo
another occaſion being twice ſollicite
Joh. 4. 46. in the behalf of a *Noble-man's ſon*, he r
fuſed to go.

This gives us an intereſt in the pray
ers of others. 2 *Tim.* 1. 16. The *Apoſt*
mentioning the good offices done t
him by *Oneſiphorus*, adds, *The Lor*
give mercy to his houſe, for he oft refreſh
ed me, and was not aſhamed of my chains
The Lord grant unto him that he may fin
mercy of the Lord in that day.

St. *Hierom* ſpeaking of a bountifu
man, gives this reaſon why ſuch an on
muſt alwayes be ſafe and happy; *Ha*
2 *Cor.* 9. 14. *bet enim multos interceſſores, & impoſſi*
bile eſt multorum preces non exaudiri. Men
do generally wiſh well to ſuch, and
ſpeak well of them; and will be ready
to ſtand by them, and aſſiſt them in
their troubles. The higheſt expreſſion
of love that can be, is for a man to be
Joh. 15. 13. ready to *lay down his life for another*;
greater love than this hath no man. Now
though *ſcarcely for a righteous man will*
one dye, *i. e.* one of a ſevere innocence;

yet

yet for a good man some will dare to dye, *Rom.* 5. 7. (*i. e.*) for a Friend and Benefactor; one that is a publick good, and of general usefulness, worth a thousand others; For such an one men may be ready to venture their lives, which is the highest expression of love and honour that may be.

And as for the advantage we hereby receive as to our *future estates*, this likewise is much every way. 'Tis some security from that danger and prejudice, which follows upon the having of riches. The evil of abundance is, That we are thereby tempted *to forget God*: *Prov.* 30. And 'tis the benefit of liberality, That it makes us to remember him, by *laying up our treasures in Heaven: And where the Treasure is, there will the heart be also*, *Luke* 12. 33.

Works of Beneficence are called by St. *Paul*, Θεμέλιον The foundation of that reward we shall receive in the world to come. Some *Citricks* have observed, that this *Greek* word in the *Hellenistical* use, hath an allusion to another *Hebrew* word, which in the *Rabbinical* Dialect signifies *Tabulæ contractus*, a Bill of Contract, a Bond or Obligation, by vertue of which, at the day of payment, *1 Tim.* 6. 19. Mr. *Mede.*

ment, we may plead a right to the reward, as being justly due to us, not *vi meriti*, but *vi pacti*, by virtue of that promise whereby God hath been pleased to become our debtor. And which is most desirable, to have Christ at the last day to be our *debtor* and *rewarder*, or our *Enemy* and *Revenger?*

III. In the *Application* of what hath been said, there are some few things I would observe, by way of

Doctrinal
Practical } *Inference.*

1. By way of *Instruction*, *these Corollaries.*

1. If such persons only be truly noble and generous, who devise liberal things, then all such as are averse from such things, are but *Nabals*, vile and foolish, and ought to be so esteemed amongst them that will pass righteous judgment, and are able to distinguish of things that differ. There may be an outward respect due to titles of Honour and Dignity, but when they are meerly nominal, without any foundation of real worth to answer them, 'tis not to be expected that they should acquire

accquire an inward esteem in the judgments and affections of judicious Persons. Men may have the custody of great estates, but they are rather the *slaves* than the *masters* of them, unless they have hearts to dispose of them to good uses.

2. Hence we learn what to think of those, who are so far from *devising liberal things*, that they must be *forced* to do *just things*. And will in cases of differences yield no further than they can be compelled by Law: insisting to the utmost upon every *punctilio* of advantage, which the rigor and the letter of the Law will afford them. These are so far from being persons of *honour*, that in the Scripture-sense they ought not to be reputed persons of honesty; *Equity* being necessary to that, no less than *Justice*.

3. Those persons are much mistaken, who think acts of this kind to be arbitrary; that they may exert or restrain their bounty at their own pleasure, without doing injury to any one. Whereas 'tis plain, that the Scripture doth impose it as a necessary duty, and esteem the omission of it an injury. And though we cannot be accused for our neg-

neglects in this kind before mans *Tribunal*, yet God will pass upon us our final Sentence according to their works.

4. If this be so sure a means for the securing and improving our estates, and that *by liberal things men shall stand*. This may afford some ground for our enquiry, Whether the neglect of this duty may not have some influence upon the general complaints in these times of want of money and trading, and of mens failing in their estates. This is plain enough, that there is no age to be mentioned, wherein the generality of persons of all ranks and conditions have been more profuse and extravagant, as to those particular expences that concern themselves in all respects, *Buildings*, *Diet*, *Apparel*, *&c.* And it may justly be feared, that this *excess* in *private* expences, may occasion a *defect* in their publick bounty: And then no wonder if men by neglect of *liberal things* do *fail* and *break*.

2 By way of *Exhortation*; We may from hence be excited to these *two* things.

1. To give honour, love and respect to liberal persons: This is as much due

to

to them from others as their bounty and charity is due from them to others. And it cannot be less than an injury to detain from any one what is his due.

It was an usual Form amongst the *Jews* upon the naming of worthy persons deceased, to add this clause to the mention of them, *whose memory is blessed.* And hence was that custom in the Primitive times of appointing *Anniversary* Memorials and Festivals in Honour of the Worthies deceased; to recount their good deeds, celebrating the praises due to them, that others by their example might be excited to do the like. And here I cannot in justice omit the mentioning of a late publick good Work (not sufficiently taken notice of, though) redounding much to the honour of our Nation and Religion, I mean the Redemption of so many Captives from Slavery, and restoring them again to their native Countries; which certainly ought to be commemorated with praise as a work *of a sweet savour*, both to God and Men: and a further addition to that double honour, which was before due to such as were the chief Promoters of it; I mean the Clergy of this Church, ingratitude to God for his

gracious and wonderful reſtitution o them to their juſt Rights and Reve nues.

And I may truly ſpeak it to the ever laſting honour of this famous *City*, tha it hath afforded as many liberal worthy Benefactors for publick good works (and that too ſince the *Reformation* whatever the *Papiſts* ſuggeſt to the con trary) as any other *City* in the Chriſtia World. And which ought further t be acknowledged to their deſerve praiſe, the ſeveral *Companies* of it, hav generally diſcharged the truſt com mitted to them by the Legacies o others, with much more honour an fidelity than particular men uſe to d Having of their own accord, withou being neceſſitated to it by a courſe o Law, obſerved that fair ingenuous equi ty, which is proper in ſuch caſes, by augmenting the allowances bequeathe in ſome proportion, according as th price and value of things hath increa ſed. This I know hath been done i ſome caſes; and I am ſure by the rule of equity it ought to be ſo in others That what was at firſt deſigned by th Will of the *Donor* as a meet and libera maintenance, and now by the riſing o

the value of things falls short of it, (if the revenue will bear it) ought to be augmented in some proportion to what was first intended. Such persons cannot justly pretend to this Character in the Text of *devising liberal things* themselves, who are not free and generous in the right disposal of the liberality of others.

2. Which brings me to the *second* branch of *Exhortation*, with which I shall conclude: That as we are now convinced of, so should we be affected with, and accordingly practice this excellent vertue of Liberality. And as we abound in every thing, in *Riches, Peace, Faith, Knowledge*, that *we abound in this grace also*. It may seem superfluous to add any thing further to that great cloud of Testimonies and Arguments which I have already urged to this purpose. Without this bounty and pity to others we can have no good assurance of God's favour to us, nor any grounds to expect it. With what face or confidence can any man ask mercy for himself, who is not ready to shew it to others? Nehem. 13. 14, 22. Mat. 5. 7.

'Tis this that must add an efficacy to our Prayers, as it did with *Cornelius*;

that must sanctifie our Possessions, our
Luk. 11. 41 *unrighteous Mammon*, which otherwise *will not be clean to us*. 'Tis the parent of honour, safety, prosperity without us; of joy, peace, confidence within us; the greatest comfort both in life and
2 Cor. 8. 8, 24. death, as being the surest evidence both of our grace here, and our glory hereafter.

'Twill be but a little while before every one of you shall be called to *give an account of your Stewardships*; and would it not be your wisdom, before that time, to have a right state of your Accounts, and to examine how they stand? I am sensible that I speak to men of experience, such as by their constant way of dealing, must needs be well versed in things of this nature; and do thoroughly understand what belongs to the making up, and adjusting of Accounts, how to put together the charge, first of what they have received, and are responsible for; and then the discharge, how it hath been laid out and expended. And I appeal to your Consciences, Can you think this would be a good account at the last day to say, Lord, thou hast intrusted me with so many Talents, such a revenue in Land, such a stock in

in Money and Commodities, such an income by Trading, or by Offices, to the value, it may be, of some thousands or hundreds by the year. Of which receipts I have expended, *Imprimis*, for my own use in *building*, *furniture*, *apparel*, *feasting*, *recreations*, *law-suits*, and perhaps some more vicious way of expence, so many *hundreds*. *Item*, for thy use and service towards the relief of thy poor Members, to works of devotion or publick bounty, either so many *blanks*, or so many *pence*.

If men would deal impartially with themselves, putting both these together, and compare them with one another; would not this be enough to shame and confound men, if they were but serious in Religion, and did in good earnest believe what they profess.

When we come to die, the remembrance of those sums, though but small ones, which we have sent before us to Heaven in works of bounty and charity, will be a greater comfort and support to our Minds than all those vast treasures which we must leave behind us upon Earth. If men do not believe these things, why do they pretend to be Christians? If they do believe them, how is

it poſſible they ſhould walk ſo unanſwerably to them?

Oh! that what hath been ſaid might prevail with ſome amongſt you, to enter upon a firm reſolution of altering the ſtate of your Accounts for the future, by reducing theſe two General Heads for *your ſelves*, and for *God*, unto a more decent and equal proportion; that the one may not conſiſt only of *pounds*, and the other of *pence*. That ſo much at leaſt may be laid out upon good works, as may afford to your Faith and Hope ſome ground and *foundation to lay hold on eternal life*.

The

The Eleventh Sermon.

Luke VII. 5.

For he loveth our Nation, and hath built us a Synagogue.

AMongst the many Paſſages in the *Goſpel* concerning thoſe miraculous Cures, which were wrought by our *Saviour*, this of the *Centurion's Servant* is upon ſeveral accounts one of the moſt remarkable.

We have it recorded in *two* ſeveral *Evangeliſts*, by St *Matthew*, *Chap.* 8. and *here* by St. *Luke*. The *firſt* of theſe ſtudying brevity and conciſeneſs in the relation of it, doth thereupon omit ſeveral circumſtances ſpecified by the *other*; whence there ariſeth ſome ſeeming inconſiſtency betwixt them. From which the *Pagans* and *Manichees* of old,

took advantage in their Objections against the truth of the Gospel.

The chief circumstance wherein the difference lies, is concerning the persons who came unto Christ. In St. *Matthew* 'tis said, that the *Centurion* himself came, *beseeching of Christ*, vers. 6. and *answering of him*, v. 8. And in this place 'tis said, that the *Centurion* first *sent the elders to him*, v. 3. and after *his friends*, v. 6. And part of their message is, *Neither thought I my self worthy to come unto thee*, v. 7.

Several things are answered to this Objection by those who write concerning the Harmony of the *Evangelists*. The most common Solution is, That what is done by a man's Proxy or Messenger, may be ascribed to a man's self, *Apostolus cujusque est & quisque*, *He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.* Christ is said to have preached *peace to the Ephesians*, Ephes. 2. 17. and *repentance to the old World*, 1 Pet. 3. 19. which he did not in his own Person, but by his Messengers.

Matt. 10. 40.

Others conceive, That the *Centurion* first sent the *Elders of the Jews*, whose commission was only to beseech cure for his Servant: And when upon their request

queſt our *Saviour* was pleaſed to come towards his Houſe, then he ſends ſome other Friends to deprecate that trouble, and to let him know, that he was not ſo preſumptuous as to expect or deſire any ſuch favour from him: But when notwithſtanding this Meſſage, our *Saviour* ſtill kept on his way towards his Houſe, then at laſt the *Centurion* himſelf comes out, and tells him, That he is altogether unworthy to have ſo great a Gueſt come under his Roof.

This being very ſuitable to all the circumſtances of the Story recorded by both *Evangeliſts*, doth ſufficiently reconcile the ſeeming difficulty about it.

So that the *Text* is part of that Meſſage which was ſent to our *Saviour* in behalf of the *Centurion*'s Servant. For the better underſtanding of the Words, and the Story to which they refer, it may be proper to premiſe ſomething concerning theſe four Particulars.

1. The *Perſon* ſending.
2. The *Meſſage* or Errand.
3. The *Meſſengers* employed.
4. Their *Succeſs*, or the iſſue of this Meſſage.

1. The *Perſon* ſending, is here deſcribed by various circumſtances; His *Calling*,

ling, *Religion*, thoſe ſpecial *Virtues* for which he was eminent.

1. His *Calling* or Profeſſion. *A certain Centurion*, *v.* 2. A Military Officer, one of thoſe Captains who were quartered up and down the ſeverall parts of *Judea*, to prevent any Commotions or Seditions amongſt the *Jews*, whilſt they were under the *Roman* Government; And 'tis likely that his Garriſon or head-Quarters were at *Capernaum*, the place where this Miracle was wrought.

2. For his *Religion*, he was neither *Jew* nor *Chriſtian*, but a *Heathen*; acknowledging no other Principles but what the Light of Nature might lead a man unto; whereby men are obliged to renounce Idols, to worſhip only the one true God, to obſerve the Rules of Juſtice and Charity, dealing ſo with others, as they deſire to be dealt with themſelves. Which Rules are particularly enumerated under ſeven Heads, ſtiled by the *Rabbins*, the *Seven Precepts* of *Noah*. And the obſervance of theſe was then counted ſufficient to entitle a man a *Proſelite*; of which there were two kinds amongſt the *Jews*, called by them *Proſelites* of the *Covenant*, and of he *Gate*. Thoſe

Thoſe were called *Proſelites of the Covenant*, who took upon them the Sign of it, namely *Circumciſion*, and did ſubmit themſelves to all the *Jewiſh* Rites injoined by *Moſes*. And all ſuch of what Nation ſoever, who were thus fully converted to that Religion, were afterwards counted as Native *Jews*, and admitted to the ſame common Privileges, and to worſhip with them, both in the times of the *Tabernacle*, and of the *Temple*. Such was *Uriah*, &c.

Thoſe were called *Proſelites of the Gate*, who during the time of *Solomon*'s Temple, ſtood only without at the *Gate*, not being admitted within the *ſepts* or Incloſures of it; though in the *ſecond* Temple there was an outward Court appointed for them, called *Atrium gentium*. Theſe were neither circumciſed, nor obſerved any of the *Moſaical* Rites, but only thoſe Precepts of *Natural Religion* which I mentioned before. And of theſe there were ſome in all Times amongſt the *Jews*, and uſually great numbers in all Cities and Places of the *Gentiles* where the *Jews* had Synagogues. Such was *Naaman* the *Syrian*, in the *Old Teſtament*; *Cornelius*, and the *Centurion* in the *New*. In the Hiſtory

Hiſtory of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, there is frequent mention of theſe kind of *Proſelites* under the title of σεβόμενοι, *worſhippers*, or *devout perſons*, *chap.* 13. 43. 16. 14; 17. 4, 17; 18. 4. who alſo were the firſt *Gentiles* converted to *Chriſtianity*.

And though there was a wide difference betwixt the *Jews* and theſe *Proſelites* in Matters of Religion, yet did it not grow up to any ſuch heats and animoſities betwixt them, but they lived peaceably together. As for the *Jews*, though they were by the *Law* obliged to eſteem ſuch perſons as *Gentiles* and unclean, with whom they might not familiarly converſe; yet were they willing upon account of their virtue to allow them ſome ſhare in their good opinion and friendſhip; eſteeming them to be pious men, and ſuch as (according to their opinion) ſhould be admitted to ſome portion of happineſs in the other World. And the *Apoſtle* ſays of ſome of them, that *they feared God*, *Acts* 10. 1, 2. and *Chap.* 13. 16.

And on the other ſide, theſe *Heathen Proſelites*, though they did not believe the *Jewiſh* Religion, or ſubmit to the Rites of it, yet becauſe they found the Principles of it more rational than any other,

other, in the prohibiting of all Vices, in their worſhip of one God, and being free from Idolatry, which all other Nations were guilty of; therefore had they a greater eſteem for the *Jews* than for any other; frequenting their *Synagogues* to hear the *Law* read and expounded, and being ready to oblige them by any bounty and favour, whereby they might teſtify a peculiar reſpect to them, as being devout and religious men.

3. As for thoſe ſpecial *virtues* recorded of this *Centurion*, there are obſervable in the Story of him theſe *four* things, for which he was eminent.

1. His great *tenderneſs* and *pity* towards his ſick Servant, who is ſaid to be *dear to him*, v. 2. though 'tis probable that he was but a Slave, either bought with his Money, or taken amongſt the Spoils of War; for ſuch kind of Servants were then moſt uſual with the *Romans*, eſpecially amongſt Military Men; yet you ſee how full of compaſſion he is towards him in his Sickneſs, how ſolicitous for his recovery, making all the intereſt he could, and engaging his chief Friends to mediate in his behalf; And from his being thus merciful we may probably

probably infer, that he was likewise a man of courage and valour. For a fierceneſs and cruelty is a ſure indication of a Coward, ſo gentleneſs and humanity are uſually arguments of a great and generous mind.

2. His *modeſty and humility.* Though others that knew him, had a great eſteem of him, yet had he a mean opinion of himſelf; *Neither thought he himſelf worthy to come unto Chriſt*, v. 7. He knew that the *Jews* did count themſelves polluted by any familiar converſe with ſuch as he was; and much leſs could he think himſelf worthy to receive any ſuch honour from *Chriſt*, as that he ſhould vouchſafe *to come under his roof.*

3. His *bounty* and *generoſity* in works of devotion, manifeſted by building a *Synagogue* for the *Jews*, erecting for them a place of Publick Worſhip at his own charge, which was a matter of no ſmall expence.

4. His great *Ingenuity* of Mind in ſubmitting to ſufficient evidence. Having been informed of thoſe great Miracles wrought by our *Saviour*, and that holy Doctrine which he taught, he is immediately convinced that he muſt needs be a Divine Perſon. And accordingly he makes

makes his addreſs to him ſuitably to this belief, expreſſing his Faith in ſuch a way as hath no other Inſtance like it in *Scripture*: His requeſt is, *Say in a word, and my ſervant ſhall be healed.* And if he ſhould have ſaid, I do not think it fitting either for me to ask, or Chriſt to grant, that he ſhould vouchſafe to come and ſee my Servant, or to lay his hand on him; 'twill be ſufficient if he ſhall pleaſe to ſpeak the word only. And he gives this reaſon for it, For if *I who am* but *a man under authority*, have ſuch a power over thoſe committed to my charge, as to make them *come* and *go* at my command, much more then may he ſend away Diſeaſes by a word of his mouth. For *I am a man*, thou art a *Divine* Perſon; I am *ſet under authority*, thou art the *ſupreme Lord* of all; *I have Soldiers under me*, a rough untractable generation of men, and yet when *I ſay to one, go, he goes; and to another come, he comes; to a third, do this, he does it*; Now Sickneſſes and Diſeaſes are thy ſervants, under thine abſolute dominion and command, to be diſpoſed of as thou pleaſeſt; and therefore as I am not worthy to come unto thee, nor is it fitting for me to expect that thou ſhouldſt

vouch-

vouchsafe to come unto me; so is neither of these necessary to the grant of my Petition, *'Tis but saying the word, and my servant shall be healed.* Upon this Message our *Saviour* seems to be somewhat surprized; 'tis said, *he marvelled at him*, and having made a stand, he turns about to the people that followed him, and said unto them, *I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel*, v. 9.

2. The Business or *Message*; which was to intercede with Christ for cure of a sick Servant. And this, those who were imployed on this account did accordingly endeavour with much earnestness, pressing their request with arguments taken from the great merit and commendation of the Person in whose behalf they did intercede; which they express *first* in the *general*, saying, *he is worthy for whom he should do this*, v. 4. and this they further specify by two *particular* instances: 1. From his *publick spiritedness*, *He loves our Nation*; he is not a person of the common temper, of a little narrow mind, immersed wholly in himself, or given up to some small designs for his own private gain and advantage. 2. His *bounty* and *generosity* in Works of Devotion, *He hath built us a Syna-*

Synagogue. What by the help of his Soldiers, and his own expence, he hath very liberally erected for us a place for publick Worſhip; which muſt needs be a great obligation to thoſe who had any zeal for their Religion; and is accordingly made uſe of as a powerful motive of favour towards him.

But here, before I proceed any further, it may be proper to ſpeak ſomething for the clearing up of this Queſtion, How it comes to be recorded as a commendable thing for a man *to build a Synagogue*, when we find no command or inſtitution for it in Scripture? And therefore it may ſeem to be a kind of *Will-worſhip*, or Humane Invention, which may as well be ſaid likewiſe concerning our Churches in theſe Times of Chriſtianity. We read indeed of a glorious *Tabernacle*, and after of a ſtately *Temple* appointed by God himſelf. All the *Parts*, *Utenſils*, *Services*, *Officers*, and every other *circumſtance* belonging to that Worſhip, being particularly determined in *Scripture*. But we read nothing at all of any command concerning *Synagogues* or *Churches*.

To this it may be anſwered, That the having of particular Places ſet apart

for the Duties of Publick Worship, is c
natural obligation, and therefore dot
not require any positive Law for th
commanding of it. Though such kin
of *Ceremonial* and *Typical* Precepts, a
are no way derivable from Natur
Light, do receive all their obligatio
from being *instituted*; yet in things tha
are *moral*, which a man may be acquain
ted with, and obliged unto by the mer
Light of Nature, in such cases a man
left to the Dictates of Reason and Pru
dence.

And from this Natural Principle wa
it that the ancient *Patriarchs*, who live
abroad in Booths and Tents, frequentl
changing their places for fresh Pastur
when they came to any new place o
abode, where they pitched their Tent
their custom was to erect Altars, an
enclose them about, which was usuall
done in some *Mountains*, *High Places*, an
Groves. And these (before they cam
to be abused by Idolatry) were in gener
request amongst them, being styled b
the name of Sanctuaries, or Holy Place
to which a reverence is commanded, *Y
shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence m
Sanctuaries*, Levit. 19. 30.

Chap. 25. 31. *Jer.* 9. 11. *Lam.* 2. 7.

When the *Israelites* wandered in th
Wilder

Wilderneſs without any ſetled Habitation, they were commanded to make a moveable *Tabernacle*, before which they were to worſhip, *Exod.* 26. And before that glorious *Tabernacle* was erected; *Moſes* had a *Tent without the Camp* for that purpoſe, called the *Tabernacle of the Congregation.*

When they were to be in a ſetled condition, they are then commanded to *fix unto the place which the Lord their God ſhould chuſe*, Deut. 12. 5. After, when God had choſen *Jeruſalem*, and in it *Mount Moriah*, *David* did firſt, out of his own inclination, make an attempt towards this work of building the *Temple*, which was afterwards accompliſhed by *Solomon.* And that Temple being deſtroyed, another was erected in the room of it, which (though it fell much ſhort of the former) yet was it one of the moſt noble and famous Structures in the whole World.

Each of theſe, the *Tabernacle* and the *Temples*, were by particular appointment. In after times we read of other kinds of Buildings for Worſhip, *Synagogues* and *Oratories.*

Synagogues were ſomewhat anſwerable to our *Pariſh-Churches*, in which

they were wont to assemble for Prayer Reading and interpreting the Law.

The *Oratories* or *Proseuchæ* were lesser Structures, commonly erected without the *Towns*, and by the Sea-side: into which it was usual for Passengers to enter for Praying, and giving of Alms.

When *Synagogues* began first to be erected, is very difficult to determine. The most common opinion is, that there were no Buildings of this kind till after the *Captivity*. As for that Phrase, *They have burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the land*, Psal. 74. 8. the Original word translated *Synagogues*, is מוֹעֲדֵי which is frequently used in other Scriptures to signifie *tempus statutum*, or *stata solennitas*; according to which the meaning of it must be, that they have abrogated the solemn *Festivals*, and caused them to cease: 'Tis so rendred by the *Chaldee* Paraphrase, the *Septuagint*, and most of the other *Versions*. And whereas St. *James* saith, *Act.* 15. 21. *Moses of old time had in every City those that preach him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day.* To this it may be answered, that the Phrase of *old time* is not necessarily to be extended unto the times of purest Antiquity, but may be well

well enough restrained to four or five hundred years preceding, when *Synagogues* might first begin, *namely*, after the *Captivity*. But of this I have had occasion to treat more largely in another Discourse.

Only this is sufficiently evident, that the liberty of building *Synagogues*, was allowed every where to the *Jews* under the *Roman* Government in our *Saviour*'s time; that he himself and his *Apostles* did very much frequent them, and consequently approve them; that though the several Officers and Laws belonging to them were without any *Scripture institution*, yet our Saviour doth rather suit the Doctrine and Precepts of *Christian* worship to this of the *Synagogue*, which was *moral* and perpetual, than to that of the *Temple-service* which was *instituted* and transitory.

As for publick Buildings for *Christian* worship, 'tis obvious that this *Way* being in the first Ages every where opposed and spoken against, the Professors of it were fain to meet (as they could with safety) sometimes in private Houses, belonging to some of the *Disciples*, where they had usually a fair upper room furnished and set apart for these Meetings.

and sometimes in *grots*, and *caves*, and *woods*: 'Till afterwards, the heat of persecution being somewhat abated, they had permission to build little *Oratories*; and in process of time, as *Emperors* and *Kings* began to favour *Christianity*, so were they careful to erect for them most sumptuous and magnificent *Temples*. For which this *Land* and *Nation* of ours was more particularly famous above any other part of the World. Our *Ancestors* having been very devout and bountiful in works of this nature, according to the old *verse*:

Anglia, mons, pons, fons, Ecclesia. —

Now though it be true that where ever men worship God with a sincere and upright heart, they shall be accepted; *Jeremy* in the *mire*, *Jonah* in the *Whales belly*, *Daniel* in the *den*, the *three Children* in the Furnace, the *Thief* on the *Cross*; yet this doth not hinder but that when we have opportunity for it, our Places of publick Worship should be both built and maintained, and esteemed in some measure suitably to the dignity of that service they are to be imployed about. And when we are in a prospe-

rous

rous estate, 'tis as proper for us to worship God in the *beauty of holiness*, as it is to do it in *Caves* and *Prisons* when we are in a condition that doth necessitate us thereunto.

You have heard the two *first* Particulars, the *person sending*, and his *message*. I shall speak more briefly to the other *Two*.

3. The *messengers* employed about this business, which were of *two kinds*. Those who were first sent, are said to be *the Elders of the Jews*, v. 3. whether the *Magistrates* of the *City*, or the *Governors* of the *Synagogue*, the *Civil* or *Ecclesiastical Rulers*, is not evident; the Word may signify either. After these, 'tis said, *he sent his friends*, v. 6. who were perhaps some other of his fellow-Officers belonging to that *Garison*. And these Messengers (it should seem) were heartily concerned in the good success of that business they undertook, as appears by their earnestness about it: 'tis said, that they did beseech Christ, σπουδαίως, v. 4. *instantly*, with much importunity and vehemence, thereby testifying their zeal and good affection for the Person by whom they were imployed.

4. And *lastly*, the *success* or issue of this *Negotiation*: 'Tis said that our Saviour did upon the first motion condescend to their request. Though at another time when he was twice sollicited in the behalf of the *Nobleman*'s Son, he refused to go, *Joh.* 4. 46. yet to shew his special esteem and favour for a person under so worthy a *Character* as this *Centurion*, he doth express his willingness, not only to gratify him in the thing desired, the healing of his Servant, but to do more for him than was asked, namely, to give him a visit; besides that large testimony and approbation which he gives to the people concerning his great worth.

So much shall serve for the opening of the Text and Story. The *Observation* I would make from the Words is this:

To be of a publick spirit, and of a bountiful generous mind in Works of Charity and Devotion, is a sure way to render a man acceptable to God, and approved of men.

It was by these *virtues* that the *Centurion* (though a *Heathen*) was so much endear-

endeared to the *Jews*, and so well accepted of by our Saviour.

And the *Scripture* doth attest to this truth in several other places. 'Tis said *Psal.* 112. 6. of the bountiful man, *that he shall be had in everlasting remembrance*; and *v.* 9. *His name shall be exalted with honour.* In conformity to which it hath been always a custom amongst the *Jews* in their speaking of any worthy man deceased, to add this clause to the mention of his Name, *whose memorial is blessed.*

1 *Chron.* 29. when *David* had perswaded the people to offer willingly and freely towards the building of the *Temple*, see how they did all rejoice and exult in the apprehension of it, *v.* 9. *Then the people rejoiced, and David the King also rejoiced with great joy, because they had offered willingly, and with a perfect heart unto the Lord.* They looked upon this work as a thing that was very well pleasing to God, and an honour to their Nation, and consequently a just occasion of joy and triumph to all the People.

When *Nehemiah*, *Chap.* 13. 14, had with great industry and success promoted the rebuilding of the Temple, he doth,

doth, upon the reflection of it, break out into this expreſſion, *Remember me, O my God, concerning this; and wipe not out the good deeds that I have done for the houſe of my God, and for the Officers thereof.* It ſeems he believed his care and activity in this work to be a thing very acceptable to God; which makes him deſire that it might be recorded and kept in remembrance to his advantage.

I might further confirm this *Obſervation* by ſeveral Reaſons. I ſhall mention only *two.*

1. From the ſuitableneſs of ſuch kind of duties unto the moral and more ſubſtantial parts of Religion. The *Apoſtle* tells us, that *the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; and they who in theſe things ſerve Chriſt, ſhall be accepted with God, and approved of men,* Rom. 14. 17, 18. The Word *Righteouſneſs* is frequently uſed in the Scripture-phraſe for the virtue of Beneficence and Bounty. By *peace* is meant that gentle and charitable diſpoſition, whereby a man is inclined to promote the quiet of Societies, and good will amongſt men. And by *the joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, we are to

to understand an ability to rejoice in an afflicted estate. These are the things recommended to us, as being the more weighty and essential parts of Religion. 'Tis no difficult matter for a man to be zealous about *meats and drinks*, he may do it to gratify his contentious humour, and to endear himself to a Party: Nor is it hard for a man to pretend a zeal for Religion by some good Wishes or kind Words, which are cheap things, and will cost him nothing; but to give testimony of it by bountiful actions, *that others may see our good works*, this is that which will make them *glorifie God in our behalf*, and acknowledge *that he is in us of a truth*. It was an humour in the *Apostolical* times, as well as since, that men set up for Reputation in Religion by their zeal about some Opinions in lesser matters. Against which the *Apostle* cautions *Titus*; *This I will, that thou affirm constantly, that they which believe in God, be careful to maintain good works*. For which he gives this reason, *For these things are good and profitable unto men*. Contentions and Disputes may please and gratifie mens present humours and passions, but they are these works of Piety and Bounty that Tit. 3.

must

muſt promote the more laſting and publick welfare, and the general good of mankind.

2. Perſons thus qualified are ſuppoſed to be of an higher rank and degree above other men. It is in Religion as in other Profeſſions; there are ſome of a Vulgar ſort, of an ordinary and common ſtandard; and there are others of a taller ſtature, of a higher form and attainments, from whom it may be expected that they ſhould adorn and add a luſter to their Profeſſion. And they are the Virtues of this kind, namely a bountiful and charitable diſpoſition towards any publick good work, that muſt raiſe Men to this higher pitch of eſteem above others. When *Araunah* offered *David* freely his *threſhing-floor*, and *oxen*, and *threſhing-inſtruments* for Sacrifice, 'tis ſaid, that he *did it as a King*, 2 *Sam.* 24. 23. in a royal and princely manner; and *David* on the other ſide refuſed it *as a King*, thinking it unworthy of him to *offer unto God of that which coſt him nothing*, v. 24.

I ſhall add nothing further at preſent by way of *confirmation* of this Point. That which I chiefly aim at is the *Application* of it.

I have

I have purpoſely made choice of this Subject, as having a peculiar ſuitableneſs to the preſent ſtate of things in this place God hath been pleaſed by his late ſevere diſpenſations, firſt to deſtroy the Inhabitants of this City by the noiſome Peſtilence, and ſince to lay waſte our Habitations by a dreadful Fire; wherein his own Houſes, thoſe that were dedicated to his Worſhip, did not eſcape; But *the devouring fire* (in the phraſe of the *Pſalmiſt*) *did come into his Sanctuaries, caſting down the dwelling-places of his name to the ground; burning up the Synagogues of God.* And amidſt the other diſmal ruins of this place, 'tis one of the ſaddeſt Spectacles to behold ſo many *Sacred Structures*, the Monuments of our Forefathers devotion and bounty, laid in the duſt. Pſal. 74. 7,8.

I ſuppoſe it needleſs to prove the neceſſity of Religion to Government, or the neceſſity of places for publick Worſhip to the keeping up of Religion. Thoſe things are in themſelves ſo plain and obvious, that no reaſonable man can have any juſt cauſe to doubt of them. That which I aim at is, to excite others by this example of the *Centurion* to ſuch a *love* of their *Nation* and *City*,

City, as may engage them to some effectual care for the building up of our *Synagogues.*

And in order to this, I would speak something. 1. *Particularly* to such as are *Magistrates.* 2. *Generally* to all *sorts of people.*

1. To you that are *Magistrates* of this City: 'Tis one of the styles belonging to your Offices, to be *repairers of breaches.* Publick things ought to be taken care of by publick persons. You have already made some provision to preserve mens Proprieties in their grounds, to enlarge the passages and avenues, whereby the City may be rendered more safe, beautiful and convenient for Trading; which are good works, and such as become worthy Magistrates: But these things concern you as you are men and Citizens; there are other things to be provided for as you are Christians: And I would crave leave to be your remembrancer, That some effectual care may be taken for the rebuilding of the Places for publick Worship. It would be very convenient, that as several *Parishes* are built up, so the repair of Churches should be in some forwardness, to which the Inhabitants might resort

reſort for the Duties of Religion. The doing of this will perhaps prove a matter of too great charge to be defrayed by the contribution of the Inhabitants, conſidering their particular loſſes. But if any conſiderable help could be procured for it from the Publick (which there is no reaſon to doubt of) the remainder might be made up by particular Charities. And both together might prove ſufficient for this great work. Nor is there any reaſon to queſtion, but if this buſineſs were ſeriouſly conſulted, and vigorouſly purſued, ſuch ways might be offered as might prove effectual both for the building of ſuch a number of *Churches* as ſhall be thought ſufficient, and likewiſe for the providing of a ſufficient maintenance for them, that none of their *Incumbents* may be put to live precariouſly upon the benevolence of their Hearers. I humbly offer this to your conſideration, as a thing that is your duty, and will tend to your honour. And I do the rather mention it now, becauſe this is the proper ſeaſon for it, while the *Parliament* is ſitting, of whoſe aſſiſtance towards ſo pious and neceſſary a work, there is no reaſon to doubt. And becauſe it will

be

be a buſineſs of ſome time, and much conſideration, to enumerate and digeſt all ſuch particulars as are neceſſary to be provided for, and eſtabliſh'd by Law; therefore will it be requiſite that this work ſhould be timely ſet about, that there may be ſufficient leiſure to deliberate and conſult about the due management of it.

2. More *generally* to *all ſorts of people*; that they would lend their helping hands to ſo good a work as this is. If this *Centurion* in the *Text*, in a ſtate of *Heatheniſm*, under his more dark apprehenſions of Religion, was ſo forward in theſe works of publick bounty, much more then will it concern us that are *Chriſtians*, not to be backward or defective in them. I might (if the time would permit) preſs this with great variety of arguments; I ſhall mention only ſome few.

1. 'Tis our *duty* to be bountiful and liberal upon all good occaſions, and may of right and juſtice be required of us. God is pleaſed indeed for the better encouragement of men to theſe things, to ſtyle them *Gifts* and *Loans*, which he engages himſelf to repay; but they are *Rent*, and *Tribute*, and *Debt*; upon the due

due payment of which we hold our Poſſeſſions, and upon the neglect or non-payment we forfeit our right to them. He is the ſupreme Lord of all, we are but his Tenants. As in the times of the *Law* men were to acknowledge his right and dominion by the offering of Sacrifice; ſo ſhould they in theſe times of the *Goſpel* by their liberal contributions towards any good work, *for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed.* When there is any good occaſion offered for our Bounty, that is the time for the paying of out Rent and Tribute, and God doth then require it of us.

2. 'Tis our *Intereſt*, a thing which upon ſeveral accounts tends to our advantage and benefit.

1. With reſpect to our ſafety: The bountiful man ſhall be *delivered in the time of trouble, preſerved from his enemies, ſtrengthened upon the bed of languiſhment*, Pſal. 41. 1, 2, 3.

2. 'Tis a means to promote the intereſt of our eſtates: *The liberal man deviſeth liberal things, and by liberal things ſhall he ſtand*, Iſa. 32. 8. (*i. e.*) He ſhall by this means be eſtabliſhed and improved in his Eſtate. *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, and he that watereth ſhall be*

watered also himself, Prov. 11. 25. Such kind of works are in the Scripture-Phrase compared to *sowing*, which is always in order to an *harvest* and encrease, *And he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully*, 2 Cor. 9 6.

3. This will promote the interest of honour and esteem amongst others: *A bountiful man shall be had in everlasting remembrance, and his name shall be exalted with honour*, Psal. 112. 6, 9. *Every one is a friend to a man of gifts*, Prov. 19.

4. This will be a means to render our Prayers and other Services acceptable, and to entitle us to the Divine favour. 'Tis mentioned as an argument of God's designing mercy and kindness to his people, when they became duly affected at his displeasure against them in the ruin of their *Temple*, and were willing to engage in the repair of it, *Psal.* 102. 13, 14. *Thou wilt arise and have mercy upon Sion, for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.* That Psalm is thought to be composed by *Nehemiah*, when he designed the repair of the *Temple*; and he mentions this as a ground of hope, that God would now at last be favour-

favourable to his people, becauſe they were affected with a ſad reſentment at the ruins of the *Temple*, and a zeal for the repair of it. Where 'tis implied, to be a mournful ſpectacle to ſee the *Temple* of God lying in the duſt, under decay and ruin; and an argument of God's favour to a people, when he puts it into their hearts to reſtore ſuch ruins.

There are ſeveral things which men are apt to pretend as *Excuſes* from ſuch kind of Duties: As,

1. *The fear of want for themſelves*; To this the *Scripture* anſwers, that *ſuch as are bountiful ſhall not lack*, Prov. 28. 27.

2. *They muſt lay up for their children*: Why? he that is merciful, *his ſeed ſhall be bleſſed*, Pſal. 37. 15.

3. But they are but of a mean condition, being put to labour hard for a poor living. Neither ſhould this exempt men from works of Charity. The *Apoſtle* exhorts men to labour with their hands

for this reaſon, *that they may be able* … *give to ſuch as need*, *Epheſ.* 4. 28. Th… indeed will alter the caſe as to the me… ſure of ſuch mens Bounty, but will n… totally excuſe them from it. *Goats ha…* and *Badgers skins*, were heretofore eſte… med a ſuitable gift for the poor of t… people. A brother of low degree m… be allowed to give φειδομένως, *ſparingl…* and a *mite* ſhall be accepted from a po… Widow. But thoſe who are rich in th… World, ſhould be rich in good Wor… alſo, ſuch were to beſtow *purple*, a… *gold*, and *jewels*. And in this ſenſe… that Scripture to be fulfilled, that *whom much is given, of them much ſhall… required*. There being no kind of ca… or exception apt to riſe up in the hea… of men againſt this Duty, but t… *Scripture* doth in ſeveral places purpoſ… obviate and anſwer it.

Exod. 35:

2 *Cor.* 9. 6.

I have only this one word to a… That we muſt all of us ſhortly d… and after a few days are paſt, m… *go to the place whence we ſhall not … turn.* And when we come to lie u… our Death-beds, then the remo… brance of our Pious Bounty and C…

r…

rity, and of the *good deeds we have done for the Houſe of our God*, will miniſter more comfort to our Minds, than all the vaſt Treaſures that we can leave behind us upon Earth. Which conſideration were enough to perſuade any one to this Duty, who is but ſerious in Religion, and doth in good earneſt believe what he profeſſeth.

The Twelfth Sermon.

Prov. XXV. 15.

—A ſoft tongue breaketh the bone.

THE Book of the *Proverbs* is a Miſcellany of Sentences, full of various and profound Wiſdom; ſuch ruling *Sentences*, מְשָׁלִים as are fit to have a ſpecial authority over a man in the guidance of his affairs. They concern all kind of matters, the *cuſtoms*, *vices*, *humours* of men, the various *buſineſſes* and *conditions* of life. *Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas; Gaudia, diſcurſus.*

And becauſe there is no greater evidence of wiſdom (which is the thing here profeſſed to be taught) than the due regulating of our *words* and *ſpeeches*, therefore is there no other ſubject which the *Wiſeman* doth more frequently inſiſt upon, than this. And 'tis one of

his *Proverbs* of this kind that I have now made choice to treat of.

Amongst the many other Rules and Qualifications to be observed in the government of our Words, that of *mildness* or *meekness*, both as to the *matter* and *manner* of them, is one of the most considerable.

And there is a special elegance in the *Text* to this purpose; 'tis one of those Proverbs that doth consist both of *Similitudes*, and *Antitheses* or oppositions, every word in it is figurative and metaphorical. The reducing of them to their plain and natural significations will sufficiently unfold the meaning of them, and may serve for Explication.

1. By *Tongue* we are to understand the Speech or Discourse, by a *Metonymy* of the *cause* for the *effect*.

2. By the *softness* of it, is meant that kind of disposition which is answerable to tenderness and yieldingness amongst tactile qualities, when a thing doth not resist the touch, so as to be offensive to it, but doth rather gently yield and give place to it. 'Tis styled elsewhere by the name of *smoothness*, and compared to *butter* and *oyl*, Psal 55. 21.

It

It may comprehend under it these *four* general Virtues.

1. *Meekness*, πραότης, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15. *Be ready to answer every one with meekness and reverence*; which is that virtue whereby we are to restrain the *anger* of our words.

2. *Gentleness*, ἐπιείκεια, *moderation, candor*, Tit. 3. 2. *Speak evil of no man; be no brawlers, but gentle*; whereby we relax from the highest extremity of things, and do abate of saying the utmost we might.

3. *Courteousness* or *affability*, φιλόφρονες, 1 Pet, 3. 8. *Be courteous, not rendring evil for evil, or reviling for reviling*, &c. ὁ τὰ φίλα φρονῶν, *qui sapit amica*. When a man endeavours to speak things benign and grateful, in whom there is a facility or accommodateness for human converse.

4. *Kindness*, Prov. 31. 26. the *Law of Kindness* is said to be *in the tongue* of a virtuous person. The original word is חֶסֶד which signifies properly *benignity*, mercifulness, benevolence. The saying or doing more in the behalf of others, than in strictness we are obliged unto.

These are the several Virtues comprehended under the metaphor of a *soft tongue*. The

The *Oppoſites* to it are deſcribed in Scripture by theſe other expreſſions,

1. *Hardneſs*, in oppoſition to *ſoftneſs*. 1 *Kings* 12. 13. 'tis ſaid that *Rehoboam* anſwered the people *hardly*, as 'tis properly rendered in the *Margent*, in the Original קָשָׁה in the *Septuagint* σκληρὰ the ſame *Greek* Word that in the 15*th* verſe by St. *Jude* is tranſlated *hard ſpeeches*; it denotes properly things that are harſh, ſtiff, rigorous; 'tis the ſame *Hebrew* word with that which is rendered *churliſhneſs*, 1 Sam. 25. 3. *Nabal* is there ſaid to be an *evil and churliſh perſon*; a difficult intractable man, ſuch as no art or induſtry could make pliable, or manage to any good purpoſe, as may be eaſily gueſſed by the manner of that anſwer which he returned to *David*'s Meſſengers.

2. *Roughneſs*, in oppoſition to *ſmoothneſs*, Prov. 18. 23. *The poor uſeth intreaties, but the rich anſwereth roughly.* עזות *fortia, robuſta, ſæva*, boiſterouſneſs, imperiouſneſs, that which is oppoſite to the meekneſs of obſecrations and intreaties.

2. *Sharpneſs*, under the compariſon of *ſwords*, and *arrows*, and *ſtings*, and *razors*, that which is apt to pierce and wound

wound men, instead of that opposite quality of *Healing*, which there should be in a virtuous tongue.

4. *Bitterness*. We read, *Ps.* 64. 3. of *bitter words*; and *cursing* is styled *bitterness*, *Jam.* 3. 10, 11. and *Rom.* 3. 11. they are both put together as being *synonimous*, *whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness*. Amongst other kinds of *evil speaking*, the Apostle reckons *bitterness*, *and wrath*, *and anger*, which are prohibited, *Ephes.* 4 31. 'tis styled by this name, because it hath such a kind of effect upon the *mind* of others, as this quality of *bitterness* hath upon the *palate*, to constringe and nauseate it. *For the ear tasteth words, as the mouth tasteth meats.*

5. *Clamor*, κραυγη, *noise*, loudness; which is likewise forbidden in that forecited place, *Ephes.* 4. 31. because 'tis usually an indication of some such eager passions as do not become a sober and prudent man, and are not suitable to the spirit of Christianity.

6. *Brawling*, Tit. 3. 2. *to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers*, ἀμάχους; it signifies a verbal pugnacity, an aptness to wrangle and contend in words, to *smite with the tongue*.

And

And ſo much ſhall ſerve for *explication* of the *Metaphor* of *ſoftneſs*, together with the *oppoſites* to it.

3. By the word *bone*, is meant that kind of *hardneſs* which is oppoſite to this *ſoftneſs*, that is, ſurly, fierce, untractable paſſions or diſpoſitions; or elſe ſuch with whom, by reaſon of their place and diſtance, 'tis difficult for a man to prevail, as is implied in the former part of the verſe, *By long forbearing is a Prince perſuaded.*

4. By *breaking*, is meant perſuading (as in the forecited clauſe) pacifying, convincing, appeaſing, prevailing with. In brief, it ſignifies the ſubduing and taking away the proper effect of hardneſs; which is to reſiſt and oppoſe any thing that it meets with. Now things that are hard, are not uſually broken, but by ſuch bodies as are more hard than they; ſo that herein lies the proper elegance of the *Text*, that the *tongue*, which is a fleſhy, tender, and weak part, ſhould by the *ſoftneſs* of it, be able to *break* that which is the hardeſt of all the reſt, the *bones*; and yet ſo it is, that a meek and gentle way of diſcourſe is the moſt effectual means to overcome the fierceſt paſſions, and moſt obdurate cruel diſpoſitions.

poſitions. And that is the true ſenſe of the Words, ſtript of their *Metaphors*; and 'tis the *Propoſition* I intend to proſecute.

There are ſeveral other Scriptures to this purpoſe, *Prov.* 15. 1. *A ſoft anſwer turns away wrath.* By *wrath* is meant the height and intention of anger; a ſoft anſwer is preſcibed as the beſt way to divert and appeaſe it: *Be ready always to give an anſwer, with meekneſs and reverence,* 1 Pet. 3. 15. and then it follows in the next verſe, *That thoſe who ſpeak evil of you, and accuſe you, may be aſhamed.* A calm and gentle way in vindicating our ſelves, is the moſt effectual means to work confuſion in ſuch as would calumniate and reproach us. 'Twas St. *Paul* adviſed this, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. *In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves,* τὸς ἀντιδια θεμένους, though they be ſuch as ſet themſelves againſt us. As his practice was accordingly. *Euodias* and *Syntiche* were two Women in the Church of *Philippi*, who (it ſhould ſeem) were at varience betwixt themſelves) St. *Paul* might have made uſe of his Apoſtolical Authority to have ſtated the difference, and to have rebuk'd the offending party; but he rather chuſeth this

this more effectual way of entreaty; and perhaps they were both in fault: *I beſeech Euodias, and I beſeech Syntiche, that they be of the ſame mind in the Lord*, Phil. 4. 2. But the great power and efficacy of this will better appear, by the ſeveral inſtances and examples to this purpoſe recorded in Scripture.

Gen. 32. we have a Story of *Eſau's* meeting his Brother *Jacob*; *Eſau* was a *rough man* as well in his inward diſpoſition, as his *outward* behaviour and way of living, and 'tis probable by his bringing four hundred men with him, that he came with a purpoſe of being revenged, and killing his Brother *Jacob*, according to his former reſolution, *Gen.* 27. 41. but thoſe mild and humble expreſſions of *Jacob* in ſtiling him *Lord*, and himſelf a *Servant*; that meſſage he ſent by the men who were to convey the droves, ver. 20. *Behold thy ſervant Jacob is behind us, for he ſaid, I will appeaſe him with a preſent, and afterwards I will ſee his face, peradventure he will accept of me.* Theſe ſpeeches did ſo ſoften the rugged and inflexible diſpoſition of *Eſau*, that inſtead of taking revenge, he offers his Brother kindneſs.

Judg.

Judg. 8. 1. When the men of *Ephraim* did enter into a high conteſt with *Gideon*, and did *chide with him ſharply*, as the *Text* hath it, he did by his mild and gentle anſwer, allay their heat; *Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? then their anger was abated towards him, when he ſaid that*, v. 3.

1 *Sam.* 1. Old *Eli*, who was mild more than enough towards his wicked Sons, yet very ſevere in his cenſuring of *Hannah*, when he tells her ſhe was drunk, *v.* 14. ſhe might have replied, that he wronged her, and that ſhe was no more drunk than himſelf; but ſhe rather chuſes to anſwer, *Not ſo my Lord, I am a woman of a ſorrowful ſpirit, I have drunk neither wine nor ſtrong drink, but have poured out my ſoul before the Lord; count not thy handmaid for a daughter of Belial*, *ver.* 15, 16. Upon this mild anſwer of hers, the old *Prophet* ſaw himſelf miſtaken, and for his rebuking, he now bleſſes her, *Go in peace, and the God of Iſrael grant thee thy petition*, v. 17.

What a kind of temper *Saul* was of, how full of paſſion and fierceneſs and cruelty, doth appear by ſeveral inſtances; what an enmity he had againſt *David*, with

with what ardor and impatience he did desire his ruin, may likewise be evident from his secret underminings, and his open pursuit of him; and yet this harsh and cruel dispositon of his, is strangely wrought upon by the mild and humble carriage of *David.* When he had cut off the Skirt of his Garment, 1 *Sam.*24. and thereby testified his fidelity to him, in that he had refused an opportunity of hurting him, when it was in his power; styling him, *My Lord*,and *my Father*, *the Lord's Anointed*, *the King of Israel*, in comparison to whom himself was but as *a dead Dog*, or a *flea*, v. 14. 'Tis said this did immediately so melt and dissolve that stony heart of *Saul*, that *he lift up his voice and wept*, *Animum sanguinis & cædis sitientem repente ad lamenta & ejulatus compulit*, saith one of the *Fathers:* Whereas before he thirsted for nothing so much as blood and slaughter, now he is so effectually wrought upon by this mildness, as to break out into tears of kindness and pity. And now he returns him a gentle answer, *Is it thy voice, my Son David*, v. 16. Whom before he prosecuted as his chiefest enemy, now he acknowledges for a Son, and commits to him (as if he

Chrysost.

he were his deareſt friend) the care of his poſterity. *V.* 21. *Swear now therefore unto me, that thou wilt not cut off my ſeed after me, not deſtroy my name out of my Fathers houſe.*

1 *Sam.* 25. There is another pregnant example to this purpoſe. When *David* was in a great chafe and fury againſt *Nabal*, and in the heat of his paſſion had taken an Oath to kill all that belonged to him, *v.* 22. for that churliſh and taunting anſwer returned by his Meſſengers; then doth *Abigal* by her ſoft and gentle ſpeeches mollify and allay this paſſion, ſhe fell at his feet and ſaid, *Let thy handmaid, I pray thee, ſpeak in thine audience. v* 24. She acknowleges the fault, that he had deſerved better from *Nabal*; beſeeches his pardon, and tells him, that *it will hereafter be no grief or offence of heart unto my Lord, that thou haſt not ſhed blood cauſeleſs, or avenged thy ſelf*, *V.* 31. By which ſhe preſently reduced him to a coolneſs and temper, made him gentle as a Lamb, who was before fierce as a Lyon. When our *Saviour* called the *Caananitiſh* Woman *Dog*, we know how her humble and gentle anſwer prevailed with him, for the ſucceſs of her petition. *Matth.* 15.

And it may be pertinent to this purpose, though it be in a Parable, what we read *Matth.* 18. 23. of a certain King who called his Servants to an account: and finding that one of them owed him ten thousand Talents, commanded him to be sold with his Wife and Children, and all that he had, who thereupon *fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* Ye know the issue of this humble demeanor; 'tis said, *His Lord was moved with compassion towards him, and forgave him his debt, v.* 27.

Thus much shall serve for Scripture Testimonies and Examples to this purpose. I proceed to the further confirmation of this truth by two *Reasons.*

1. From the *nature of these fierce passions,* and this obduracy or hardness of temper, which are encreased by opposition, and consequently must be abated by gentleness and yielding. The collision of two bodies that are hard, will be apt to strike fire betwixt them, which cannot be done when one of them is soft. Wrath is oftentimes compared to fire; now the way to extinguish fire, is not by blowing it, or adding fewel to it, but rather by with-

drawing

drawing that by which it is ſupplied: And it was a wiſe ſaying of the Son of *Sirach*, *Eccleſiaſticus* 8. 3. *He that ſtriveth with a man of tongue, heaps wood upon his fire*; and again *chap.* 28. 12. *If thou blow the ſpark, it ſhall burn; if thou ſpit upon it, it ſhall be quenched, and both theſe come out of the mouth: i. e.* ſuch words may be ſpoken as may either *inflame* the anger of others, or *extinguiſh* it; and of what kind theſe muſt be, may be eaſily known by what I have been diſcourſing. I appeal to every man's experience; Did you ever know any man convinced or converted by this wrathful boiſtrous way? doth it not rather alienate mens minds, and ſet them at a further diſtance? true indeed, it may be a means to fright ſome meaner timerous ſpirits to a ſeeming feigned compliance, to make them diſguiſe their enmity, but it will never work them over to a hearty conviction, and make them true friends. With what reaſon can any man expect thoſe counſels ſhould be effectual, which are delivered in ſuch a way as to argue a hatred and contempt of the perſons whom we would perſuade? Though a man be ſuppoſed to have the truth on his ſide,

and ſhould be able to urge very cogen
and ſtrong arguments for the proof of it
yet if they ſhould be preſſed with ſcorn
and harſhneſs, and bitterneſs, the *reaſon*
of them would not ſo much enforce, a
the *paſſion* of them will weaken and di
parage them: It will undoubtedly b
the moſt effectual way to put *hard* argu
ments into *ſoft* words.

2. From the *nature of Lenity* and gen
tleneſs, whoſe property it is to inſinu
ate it ſelf into the hardeſt things. 'T
compared to *Oyl*, which will pene
trate and ſupple more than any other l
quor. He that goes about to convinc
and perſwade another, if he doth
manage it, that it may appear he in
tends kindneſs to the perſon whom h
would prevail upon, that he hath
love for him, and doth heartily deſi
his welfare, his work is half done. Tha
prophecy *Pſal.* 45. 4. *Ride on proſperou*
ly, *becauſe of the word of truth and meek*
neſs, doth refer to the Doctrine of th
Goſpel, and the Kingdom of Chriſ
which by the meekneſs of its profeſſor
was firſt propagated, and became triu
phant through the Heathen Worl
The true nature of things may be mo
clearly diſtinguiſhed, when there a
n

no miſts or clouds ſtirred up by the heat of contention. Many differences might be half reconciled, if they were but mildly debated. It was not perhaps without ſome myſtery, that *Noah*'s dove brought an *Olive*-branch in her mouth, to ſhew the mutual dependance betwixt theſe two, *mildneſs*, and *peace*. 'Tis the end of anger to bring men to a ſenſe of their fault, or be revenged upon them for it; now a meek ſubmiſſion is one way of ſatisfying this end. Beſides, that mild and gentle carriage will diſcover the weakneſs and deformity of rage and fierceneſs, and in that reſpect may be a means to break it in others.

This expreſſion in the Text concerning the hardeſt things being broken by the ſofteſt, may perhaps contain in it an alluſion to that ordinary experiment of breaking of Flint upon a Pillow, and a Sword upon a Feather-bed; when the concuſſion of a blow is more equally diſperſed into all the parts of the body, ſo as to operate upon the weakeſt. It is *Hippocrates* his counſel, that a Phyſician ſhould always be provided with μαλάγματα, *Lenitives*, gentle mollifying applications, as being of frequent uſe

and great efficacy; and they are so no less to the *minds* and passions of men, than to their *bodily diseases.*

Before I come to the *Application* of this Point, there are these *three Questions* to be spoken unto for the clearer stating of it, How this Doctrine may consist with,

1. Those *Imprecations,*
2. Those severe *Increpations,*
3. The duty of *zeal* and reproving.

Obj. 1. For the imprecations and Curses. We have frequent examples of these in Scripture, not only against sin in general, as those pronounced in Mount *Ebal*; but likewise against particular persons. They are frequent in the *Psalms*, and especially that 109. *Psalm*; and in the *New Testament* likewise, St. *Peter* to *Simon Magus*, *Acts* 8. 20. *Thy mony perish with thee.* St. *Paul* to *Elymas*, *Acts* 13. 10. and elsewhere to *Alexander* the Copper-smith, 2 *Tim.* 4. 14. and he wishes *they were cut off that trouble the Church*, *Gal.* 5. 12. Besides the many *woes* which are denounced by our *Saviour* himself against the *Scribes* and *Pharisees.* Now the Question is, How these examples may consist with this Doctrine concerning *soft words*?

To

To this, ſeveral things may be ſaid by way of Anſwer and Solution, which the time will not permit me to inſiſt upon; I ſhall only mention theſe few.

1. Divers of theſe *Imprecations* in Scripture, though they are pronounced *optatively*, yet are they to be underſtood *declaratively*, as being declarations of the true ſtate and condition of ſuch perſons. They are *Verba prædicentium, non vota imprecantium*, as St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks. The *Hebrew* Phraſe in thoſe places which are rendred as Imprecations, being as well capable of the *Indicative* future, as the *Imperative* Mood and Senſe.

2. Thoſe who uſed theſe Imprecations, were ſuch as were extraordinary Perſons, endowed with the Spirit of diſcerning, whereby they were enabled to judge of the incurable ſtate of thoſe with whom they converſed. There are ſome that are *curſed Children*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. κατάρας τέκνα, *filii maledictionis, execrandi homines*, and to ſuch curſes are reſerved as their due portion: And therefore no wonder though ſuch as had an extraordinary Spirit of diſcerning their true ſtate, do uſe imprecations againſt them,

which yet can be no warrant for other persons to imitate. As none but the Magistrate may use the Sword for revenge, because of his publick station and calling, whereby he is authorized for it; so none but extraordinary Prophetical men should use these maledictions. If others shall presume upon it because of their example, they will justly fall under the rebuke of our Saviour, *Luke* 9. 55. *You know not what spirit ye are of.* The ordinary rule prescribed for mens practice, is that of *Matth.* 5. 44. *Rom.* 12. 14. *Bless, I say, and curse not.*

3. We are to consider the motive or affection, upon which such imprecations as we read of have proceeded; which were not carnal, or rash anger or desire of revenge in reference to any particular hurt or injury against themselves, the usual occasions of them in other men; but Spiritual and Divine, respecting the interest and cause of God, and zeal for his glory. In our own cases we are taught to be patient and long-suffering, praying for our persecutors.

4. The wishing of evil directly to any under the notion of evil, must needs be malice, and can never be lawful;

Not

Not but that 'tis lawful to pray for ſuch things as by way of conſequence will neceſſarily imply a blaſting and kind of malediction upon the attempts of others, which is no way inconſiſtent with the true happineſs of their perſons. The wiſhing of ſuch kind of temporal evils, as tend to the preventing of greater evils, or elſe are to be inflicted by way of correction and vindicating of Divine Juſtice, are not oppoſite to the rules of Charity. 'Tis lawful for us to wiſh conditionally ſome temporal evils upon our ſelves by way of correction and reſtraint from ſin, that God would rather afflict us, than ſuffer ſin upon us; and conſequently we may wiſh the ſame to others, the love of our ſelves being the rule and meaſure of our love to others. Of this nature was that petition, *Pſal.* 83. 16. *Fill their faces with ſhame, O Lord, that they may ſeek thy name.* This is not to pray againſt them, but for them. We may likewiſe pray againſt the unjuſt actions and attempts of our enemies, *Acts* 4. 29. *And now, O Lord! behold their threatnings*; but not againſt their perſons. Mr. *Perkins* ſpeaking concerning this Queſtion, in his *Caſes of Conſcience*, concludes it to be

be unlawful for a man to pray againſt the perſon of the *Pope*, though he ſhould believe him to be the *Antichriſt*, but only againſt his *Antichriſtian* ſtate and regiment, whereby he ſet himſelf againſt the Kingdom of Chriſt. As for the imprecations of *David* that are ſometimes repeated out of the *Pſalms*, they are by us to be uſed, either as the Hiſtorical part of Scripture, or elſe as being directed againſt the kingdom of ſin in general, and the obdurate implacable enemies of God; or as being a kind of Prophecies, wherein the puniſhment and revenge of ſuch is foretold.

2. Obj. 2. How may this Doctrine of mild and ſoft words conſiſt with thoſe ſevere *Increpations* in Scripture? Doth not our Saviour call the Phariſees, *Serpents, and generation of vipers*, Mat. 23. 33? and *Herod* by the name of *Fox*, *Luk.* 13. 32? Doth not the *Apoſtle* ſtile ſome among the *Philippians*, *dogs*, Phil. 3. 2? *Beware of dogs*; and the *Galatians*, *Fools*, 3. 1?

Anſ. To this it may be ſaid, 1. That ſuch Prophetical men as have an extraordinary ſpirit of diſcerning, whereby they are able to judge the true ſtate of others, may uſe ſuch hard words towards them, which it may not be lawful for others to

to imitate, as was ſaid before concerning imprecations. 2. Thoſe that are in a publick ſtation, or in ſuch a ſuperior relation to us, as doth authorize them to correct and puniſh us, may likewiſe chide and reprehend us with ſeverity; but not ſuch as are of a private condition, or have no ſuperiority over us.

3. How may this conſiſt with the duties of *zeal* and *reproving*, which ought ſometimes to be done with ſeverity, *Rebuke them ſharply*. He that ſaith, *Be angry and ſin not*, doth ſeem to ſuppoſe that a man may ſometimes ſin, in not being angry, when by his ſinful ſilence and lenity, he either really doth, or elſe ſeems to conſent unto, and be partaker with others in their offences? 3. *Obj.*

To this it may be ſaid, That 'tis not the nature of theſe things to oppoſe, but to regulate one another. We read, *Jam.* 3. 13. of *meekneſs of wiſdom*, that is, ſuch a wiſe mildneſs as will direct a man how to order his zeal and rebukes, both as to the degrees, objects, occaſions, and manner of expreſſing them. That's a bottomleſs boundleſs charity and ſeverity which extends alike to all perſons and offences. Let the proper objects of theſe be duly diſtinguiſhed, and *Anſ.*

and these graces may very well consist together, and be subservient to one another. When the matter we are to speak to, doth require any special indignation, it should appear to proceed from the zeal of a displeased friend, rather than the bitterness of a provoked enemy. It should seem to argue too much levity, for men to accustom themselves to an *Ironical* and jeering way of rebuking others; nor is it so suitable to that awful reverence which men should be affected with in the discharge of their Ministerial employments. And it will be too much rashness to check men in a passionate revengeful manner.

Appl. For the *Application* of what hath been said, I will infer these few *Corollaries.*

1. If soft words be of such a prevailing efficacy upon men, above such as are wrathful and harsh, then soft and gentle *Actions* must be so too. Words being of no other force than as they denote our inward thoughts, or outward actions. We read *Hos.* 11.4. of the *bands of a man*, and the *cords of love*; implying, that to such as have not put off the nature of Humanity, there can be no such powerful obligation as that of kindness.

2. The

2. The *folly and ſinfulneſs of hard ſpeeches*, to which may be reduced *curſing*, *reviling*, *upbraiding*, *ſcoffing* or *taunting*, *brawling*, *maſterlineſs*, or imperiouſneſs of ſpeech, *oſtentation*, *ſcorning*, *churliſhneſs* and *roughneſs*, or any other the like diſpoſitions, whereby others may be provoked to anger and offence; which will not become any man that pretends to Chriſtianity in his ordinary converſe, much leſs Miniſters, and leaſt of all in the diſcharge of this ſolemn duty. *Nugæ in ore ſacerdotis ſunt blaſphemiæ.*

3. The *lawfulneſs and fitneſs of giving men the reverence and honour in reſpect of their proper Titles, juſt praiſe and other civil reſpects, belonging to their places and degrees.* Againſt that melancholick generation of men, of late riſen up amongſt us, who place ſo much of their Religion in being unmannerly; than which nothing is more diſagreeable to the light of nature, or to the precepts and practice of Scripture. The *Apoſtle* exhorts, *Rom.* 13. 7. that we ſhould *render to all their due, fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour is due.* And 1 *Pet.* 2. 17. We are enjoined to *honour all men*, that is, to give every man

man that due eſteem, both in our carriage and words, which according to the rules of juſtice or charity, may belong unto him in reſpect of his *place*, or *abilities*, or *condition*. The compellations of *Lord* and *Father*, are frequently uſed in the *Old Teſtament*, by way of civil reſpect to thoſe in a ſuperior condition. *Paul* and *Silas* did not give any check to the *Jaylor*, Acts 16. 30. when he ſtiled them Κύριοι, *Sirs*, *Maſters* or *Lords*. St. *Luke* uſes the Title of *moſt excellent Theophilus*, *Luk.* 1. 3. When St. *Paul* was to ſpeak publickly for himſelf before a Civil Judicature, he doth with all imaginable ſoftneſs inſinuate himſelf into the good liking of his Judges, by acknowleging his own happineſs, in that he was to plead before a Perſon ſo *learned and expert in all the Cuſtoms and Queſtions among the Jews*, as King *Agrippa* was, *Acts* 26. and afterwards when he was interrupted in his ſpeech by *Feſtus*, by that rugged and reproachful paſſage, in telling him *he was mad*; He makes a ſoft and ſubmiſſive anſwer to him, *I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus.*

As for that Objection, *Mat.* 23. 8, 9. *Call no man Father upon earth, neither be ye called Maſters:* This cannot refer to thoſe

thoſe Titles of reſpect, which concern Natural or Civil Relations, becauſe theſe words were afterward frequently uſed by the *Apoſtles* in this ſenſe; but they muſt refer to that ſignification of the words, wherein they were given to the leading-men of the *Phariſees*, whoſe Dictates and Traditions were to be received without any examination or diſpute, as if they had a *maſterly* or *paternal* power over the faith of men; and in this ſenſe *God only is our Father or Maſter.*

3. For the Reprehenſion of ſuch as are apt to be tranſported unto bitter and provoking words. This is very *unmanly*, as being againſt the rules of *Morality*, and very *unchriſtian*, againſt the precepts of the *Goſpel*. Though others ſhould begin with us by provoking language, yet 'twill not be proper for us to return the like; this were to draw the ſaw of contention, which muſt needs make a very harſh ungrateful noiſe to any ſober hearers. 'Twere more noble to yield to our adverſary in this kind, than to ſubdue him; whereas if you do not give place to him, you muſt give place to anger, and that is to give place to the Devil. That whereby men uſe to cover and excuſe their infirmities in this kind, is the *Epheſ.* 4. 26, 27.

pre-

pretence that it is the ſins of others by which they are provoked to uſe ſo much ſharpneſs to them; and againſt ſin men ought to be zealouſly angry.

There are two Conſiderations I would ſuggeſt to ſuch: 1. Have you any zeal againſt your own ſins? do they faſten upon your thoughts with any diſpleaſure and trouble proportionably to the injuries you ſuffer from men? To pretend that your zeal is againſt the ſins of others, when you have little ſenſe of your own, muſt needs be hypocriſy. 2. If it be a ſenſe of the ſin and fault of others, that you are ſo affected with, then you will be willing to uſe the moſt effectual way for the redreſſing of it, which is by ſuch kind of reproofs as proceed from love, not anger or revenge, ſuch as may convince, not exaſperate. Let it be ſuppoſed that the thing you contend for is truth, yet you muſt ἀληθεύειν ἐν ἀγάπῃ, *follow the truth in love.* If one man may be fierce and ſevere becauſe he is in the right, why then another man that doth but think himſelf ſo, will be ſo too; and at this rate, what would become of peace, and ſociety amongſt men?

4. I

4. I proceed to a word of *Exhortation*, to perſwade us unto that kind of ſoftneſs and lenity in our ſpeeches, which is here commended.

1. From the *ſinfulneſs, danger, miſchief* of the contrary diſpoſition in a threefold regard.

1. As to the *effect* of it. 'Tis quite oppoſite to the other. As *a ſoft tongue breaks the bone*, ſo an hard tongue will be ſo far from breaking that which is hard, nay or ſo much as that which is ſoft, that it will rather render it more obdurate. *Grievous words will ſtir up anger*, even amongſt men of gentle and peaceable diſpoſitions. *David* was a man of a meek and humble ſpirit, and yet what tranſport of fury was he under upon the churliſh anſwer of *Nabal*? And though at another time when his ſpirit was low, and he was under great affliction, he did with another kind of temper endure the revilings of *Shimei*; yet that made an impreſſion upon him afterwards, and his followers were under no little indignation upon it, as may appear by that ſpeech of *Abiſha*; *Why ſhould this dead dog curſe my Lord the King? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head*, *ver.* 9. When the people

Prov. 15. 1.

were assembled at the Coronation of
1 *King.* 12. 4. *Rehoboam,* professing their readiness to serve him, and beseeching him to make their yoke lighter, upon his answering of them roughly, you know what a mischievous consequence happened.

2. The *Punishment* belonging to it. There are many severe threats and judgments denounced in Scripture against *hard speeches.* Psal. 12. 3. *The Lord will cut off the tongue that speaketh proud things.* Pride is the principle of this hardness, as humility is of softness, *Mat.* 5. 22. *Whosoever shall say to his brother, Racha i. e.* whosoever shall out of anger call him vain empty fellow, shall be in danger of the Council, or the punishment of stoning; whosoever shall use any more virulent opprobrious expressions, and *call him fool,* shall be in danger of the *Vivicomburium,* to be burnt alive, (*i. e.*) there shall hereafter at the last judgment be such a kind of gradation in the punishment of these sins, as there are for the most Capital offences among men. One of the principal things that men shall hereafter be condemned for, when *the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints to execute judgment,* is *their hard speeches, Jude* 15.

3. 'Tis

3. Tis *an indication of a rough and unhewen ſpirit*, not reduced from its natural ferity and ſavageneſs; not poliſhed by education, not tamed and made gentle for civil converſe. *A fool will upbraid churliſhly, Eccluſ.* 18. 18. 'Tis for a *Nabal* to uſe hard words. All kind of cruelty is commonly an argument of cowardice. There is not uſually a ſurer ſign of an inveterate ill nature, than the habit of ſharp provoking ſpeeches. Witneſs the Son of *Sirac Eccluſ.* 23. 15. *The man that is accuſtom'd to opprobrious words will never be reformed all the days of his life.* 'Tis the work of a *Shimei* and a *Rabſhekah* to *revile*, who upon that account are infamous to a *Proverb.* 'Tis obſervable, that in the diſtribution of the *Tribes*, betwixt mount *Gerizim* and mount *Ebal*, for the work of *bleſſing* and *curſing*; thoſe Tribes for the moſt part were appointed to ſtand upon mount *Ebal*, who were the children of the *bondwomen*, leſs noble and generous than the reſt, and ſo the fitter for this harſh and ſervile work.

2. There are other motives to this purpoſe, to be derived from the *benefit* and advantage of ſoft words, beſides the *efficacy* and power of them.

1. They are of great *Ornament*; which ſhould be a prevailing motive. Men uſually put an high value upon, and take great pains for thoſe abilities which will render their ſpeech graceful and acceptable, to which nothing will contribute more than this. Upon which account the Scripture ſtiles it by this name; that very Word which in one place is called *kindneſs of the tongue*, in another place is rendered *goodlineſs*, *Iſa.* 40. 6. *All fleſh is graſs, and the goodlineſs*, &c. implying, that nothing is more *comely* and *graceful* than this.

Prov. 31. 26.

2. Its *ſuitableneſs to our profeſſion* from the pattern ſet us by our *Lord and Maſter*. *Meekneſs* was *the grace of his lips*; *when he was reviled, he reviled not again*; *when he ſuffered, he threatned not*. 1 Pet. 2. 23. He was mild and gentle towards his betrayers, accuſers, condemners, crucifiers. *As a ſheep before his ſhearer*. And he hath preſcribed our imitation of him in this, as the ſureſt way to *find reſt for our ſouls*, *Mat.* 11. 29. 'Tis for dogs and ſwine to bark and tear, and bite one another; Chriſtians are, or ſhould be, ſheep and lambs.

In brief, 'tis a qualification this, that is uſually an indication of wiſdom and great

greatneſs of mind, 'tis profitable to human ſociety, acceptable to God, pleaſing to men, advantageous to our quiet, honour, ſafety, and therefore upon all theſe accounts may juſtly challenge our care and ſtudy.

I have been forced to run over ſome of theſe things but ſlightly, for fear of being tedious. And Oh that what I have ſaid might effectually prevail with men, *to lay aſide all that bitterniſs and wrath, and evil ſpeaking*, which perſons of different perſwaſions have in all times been prone to; that we might in this kind unanimouſly join our hearts, and tongues, and pens, to promote the publick peace and proſperity both of Church and State. What kind of importunities and obſecrations ſhould we not uſe towards one another for this end? But men can but ſpeak to the ear, 'tis God that muſt ſpeak to the heart; let us beſeech him, the God of all patience and comfort, that he would beſtow upon us ſoft hearts, and ſoft tongues; that he would *ſet a watch before our mouths, and keep the door of our lips*; that upon the experience we have had, of the miſchief of mutual exaſperations, we may now every one of us apply our

selves to the most effectual means for composing the spirits of men, and healing their differences; that laying aside all other povocations, we may make this our business, *to consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works.*

The End of the Twelfth Sermon.

The

The Thirteenth Sermon.

PHIL. IV. 5.

Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand.

THESE Words are among ſeveral other precepts and counſels which ſeem to have no connexion with one another, and therefore I ſhall handle them abſolutely without any reference to the Context.

And there are theſe three parts conſiderable in the words:

1. A *Duty* enjoined, *Moderation.*

2. The *extent* or manner of its being exerciſed, it muſt *be known unto all men.*

3. A *reaſon* or argument to enforce it, *The Lord is at hand.*

I have ſevered the *Text* into theſe parts for the more orderly explication

of the ſeveral *Terms* contained in it.

I. Concerning the *virtue* enjoined, *your Moderation*, τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν. In the Original 'tis an *Adjective* put *Subſtantively*, wherein there is a peculiar elegance and *Emphaſis*. The *Syriac* and *Arabic* render it *manſuetudo*, meekneſs. The *Vulgar*, *Arias Montanus*, and others, *modeſtia*, modeſty, a compoſedneſs of life and manners. The *Æthiopic*, *Autoritas veſtra*, your Authority; for which there ſeems to be very little ground in the ſignification of the word. Others *Humanitas*: Our *old Tranſlation* did render it by the word *Patience*. And the ſame original word is by our *preſent Tranſlation* ſo rendred, 1 *Tim.* 3. 3. Not given to filthy lucre, but patient, ἀλλ' ἐπιεικῆ ſometimes 'tis tranſlated *clemency* or *courteſy*, *Acts* 24. 4. ſometimes *gentleneſs*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 1. *Titus* 3. 2. *Jam.* 3. 17. 1 *Pet.* 2. 18.

The *Hebrews* expreſs the ſame notion by three words, derived from the root שׁוּ, חלם, חשׁו. The one ſignifying *rectitude*, the other *readineſs to pardon*, the other *Peace*.

Ariſtot. Ethic. lib. 5. cap 10. The *Philoſopher* in his *Ethicks*, where he treats particularly of it, makes it to be a *ſpecies* or branch of *Juſtice*, whereby

by we are directed and inclined to ſupply that by right reaſon, which is not provided for in the words of the written Law. Becauſe 'tis not poſſible in the making of general Rules or Laws to foreſee all ſuch particular caſes and circumſtances as may happen. Therefore that habit whereby a man is enabled and inclined to deal according to the equitable ſenſe of the Law, and to allow for ſuch particular circumſtances as may make a real difference in ſeveral Caſes, this is ſtiled ἐπιείκεια or *equity*, which is a moral *virtue* placed betwixt the two *extremes* of Ἀκριβοδίκαιον *rigor*, or *ſummum jus* on the one hand, inſiſting too much upon the letter; and *relaxatio nimia*, remitting too much from the true ſenſe of it, on the other hand. Now both theſe extremes, the exceſs and the defect being evidently vices, it muſt thence neceſſarily follow, that the *medium* betwixt them muſt be a virtue, and have in it the obligation of a duty.

So that he who in thoſe things which the Lawgiver could not particularly provide for, doth judge according to the equitable ſenſe of the Law, is ἐπιεικὴς an equal Magiſtrate. And he who in ſuch a caſe is willing to depart from his own

own ſtrict right, out of compliance with that meaning which the Legiſlator would in ſuch a caſe have particularly determined could he have foreſeen it, is *homo æquus*, as a private perſon.

But now beſides this forinſecal notion of the word as it refers to poſitive Laws, and the diſpenſation of juſtice, there may yet be another more general ſenſe of it, with relation to all kind of differences and conteſts amongſt men, whether in matters of Opinion or Intereſt, wherein they ſhould demean themſelves towards one another with ſuch a kind of temper as may be mutually beſt for all, and may in the various changes and revolutions of things, moſt promote the good of mankind. And ſo 'tis a virtue inclining us to ſuch a kind of benign and equitable temper in our converſing with one another, whereby we may endeavour to preſerve concord and amity in our treating concerning thoſe things about which we differ.

There are ſome virtues that go under ſeveral names, and yet are of the ſame family and very near of kin, being differenced rather *modally* than *ſpecifically*, from the quality and condition of the *perſon* by whom they are to be exerciſed.

So

So the ſame virtue which in the generality of men we call *meekneſs and gentleneſs*, this in ſuperiors is ſtiled *clemency*, which is *lenitas ſuperioris adverſus inferiorem*. Not that it hath any different form or act, but is only diſtinguiſhed by the object towards whom 'tis exerciſed, namely, towards thoſe of an inferior rank. And thus it is with this ἐπιείκεια, which is a kind of meekneſs, with this peculiar difference, that it refers more eſpecially to matters of controverſy, and doth always incline to the moſt amicable and gentle way in judging of, and accommodating of things, and ſuch a prudent relaxation of the utmoſt rigor, as right reaſon ſhall direct according to the variety of caſes and circumſtances.

And this I conceive to be the moſt proper notion of this word, according to its true ſcope and extent. There are ſeveral other virtues of affinity to it, being either fruits or concomitants of it, which I may have occaſion to ſpeak of afterwards.

II. The *Second* particular obſerved in the words, was the *extent* or manner of this virtues being exerciſed, it muſt be *known unto all men*, which phraſe may ſignify theſe three things. 1. Thoſe

1. Thoſe *manifeſt* and real *proofs* we are to give of this Virtue; which muſt be ſuch as may be ſeen and *known unto all men*. It muſt not only be internal as to our temper and frame of mind, but external too in all our dealings and carriage towards others.

2. That it be *ſignal* and eminent as to the *degree* of it, as being one of thoſe properties whereby Chriſtians are to be diſtinguiſhed from other Profeſſions and Sects of men in the world. Their *light* muſt *ſo ſhine before men, that others ſeeing their good works*, may ſpeak well of them. They muſt *adorn the doctrine* they profeſs, by ſuch a demeanour as may win over others to a love of it.

3. That it be *univerſal* as to the *extent* of it, both in regard of the *Acts*, *Objects* and *Occaſions* of it, by ſhewing equity and moderation in all buſineſſes, towards all perſons, as well inferiors as ſuperiors, the unconverted *Gentiles*, and the contentious *Jews*; that neither of theſe may have any juſt ground *to accuſe our good converſation*. 'Tis no difficult matter for men to be fair and kind, and moderate towards ſuch as are of the ſame way, and agree with them in the main. This is but a common and low attain-

attainment, and is not thank-worthy, doth not deſerve any peculiar commendation. The rules of Chriſtianity do oblige to a greater extent of it, *namely*, that it ſhould be towards all men.

III. The *Third* particular obſerved in the words, is the *reaſon* or argument to enforce this duty, *The Lord is at hand*, ἔγγυς *propè*, he is near. Which phraſe is capable of various ſenſes. It may refer either,

1. To his preſence with us, and knowlege of our actions. He always looks on, and takes notice what our carriage and demeanour is; whether it be with that gentleneſs and equity towards others, as his is towards us. He obſerves all our ways, and therefore we had need to demean our ſelves as being under his eye.

2. Sometimes this phraſe of God's being near, doth refer to approaching judgments. So the time of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* is ſtiled the *coming of the day of Chriſt*, when he ſhould execute temporal judgments upon his enemies Upon which account St. *John* ſtiles that age by the name of ἐσχάτη ὥρα, *the laſt hour*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 18. So likewiſe is that place interpreted, *Heb.* 10. 37.

Te

Ye have need of patience, for yet a little while, μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The scope of it being to comfort them that were ready to fall off from Christianity, upon the persecution of the *Jews*, amongst whom the *Hebrew* Christians lived.

3. He is near in respect of his coming to judgment, and that in a twofold respect.

1. In regard of every man's particular judgment at the time of his death. 'Tis but a little while that we are to continue in this world, we must shortly die, none of these lesser things are worth our eager contention. We should so demean our selves at the present, as may bring us comfort at the last.

2. In respect of the general Judgment. That time cannot be far off, *The end of all things is at hand*, 1. Pet. 4. 7. *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The Judge is at the door*, *Jam.* 5 9. There are several passages in the *New Testament*, which seem to intimate as if the *Christians* in the *Apostles* times did expect that this day should come before the end of that generation. Which St. *Paul* doth caution them against, 2 *Thes.*

Rev. 1. 3. & 22. 10.

2. 2.

2. 2. *Be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, or troubled, as if the day of Chriſt were at hand.* So near at hand it was not. The belief and expectation of that, as if this were the ſenſe of thoſe Prophecies concerning it, might upon the diſappointment of it, prove a temptation to Unbelief and Apoſtacy from the Chriſtian Faith: And therefore the *Apoſtle* thinks fit to rectify that miſtake, and prevent the further progreſs of it. But yet ſince no man knew when that day and hour would come, Chriſtians ought always to demean themſelves as if it were at hand, and to live in a continual expectation of that time when Chriſt ſhall come to judge the world, and to vindicate his Saints: When he ſhall *render to every man according to his works*, to them who by a moderate demeanor of themſelves, amidſt the various conditions of this life, and *by a patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory and honour, eternal life.* But to them that are violent and *contentious*, *tribulation* and *anguiſh*, *Rom.* 2. 7, 8. And therefore there is upon this account very good reaſon why *our moderation ſhould be known unto all men.*

The

The words thus explained will afford this *Obſervation:*

'Tis the duty of Chriſtians to give ſignal teſtimony of their equity and moderation upon all occaſions of difference and conteſt with one another: Not to inſiſt upon the utmoſt rigor of things, but to be ready to comply with all ſuch gentle and prudent expedients, as may help heal and accommodate the differences amongſt them.

Though this word *Moderation* do but ſeldom occur in Scripture, being ſcarce any where elſe uſed but here: yet that which is the ſubſtance and meaning of it, is frequently commanded, and the contrary thereunto prohibited, under different expreſſions in other places of Scripture. This ſome conceive to be the ſenſe of that place, *Eccleſ.* 7. 7. *Be not righteous over-much, neither make thy ſelf over-wiſe, why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thy ſelf?* (*i. e.*) inſiſt not upon the utmoſt extremity of things, as if it were wiſdom to take all the advantages you could from the ſtrict letter of the Law. This were the readieſt way *to deſtroy your ſelf*, by teaching other men to do the like againſt

gainſt you; there being no ſafety for any one, if every one muſt uſe another according to the utmoſt rigor. *Prov.* 19. 11. *It is the glory of a man to paſs over a tranſgreſſion.* Men may think to get the repute of ſtrictneſs and zeal by being rigid and ſevere towards the failings of others: But 'tis a much more glorious thing to ſhew gentleneſs and forbearance towards them; It argues a man to have a noble and generous mind, and a real ſenſe of humanity.

There are ſeveral other expreſſions to this purpoſe in the *New Teſtament*. As *Epheſ.* 4. 1, 2. *I beſeech you that ye walk worthy of that vocation wherewith ye are called, in all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long ſuffering, forbearing one another in love.* *V.* 32. *And be ye kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you.*

Phil. 2. 3. *Let nothing be done through ſtrife or vain glory, but in lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem others better than themſelves, v.* 14.

Gentleneſs is reckoned as *the fruit of the Spirit, Gal.* 5. 22. A mark of that *wiſdom which is from above, Jam.* 3. 17. an inſeparable property of *the ſervant of*

the Lord, who *must not ſtrive, but be gentle, ſhewing all meekneſs to all men*, 2 Tim. 2. 24.

Finally Brethren, have compaſſion one of another, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwiſe bleſſing, 1 Pet. 3. 8, 9.

It were eaſy to back theſe preceprs by ſeveral examples out of Scripture. That of *Abraham*'s carriage in the conteſt betwixt him and his Nephew *Lot*, who for peace ſake was willing to recede from his own right, and give him his choice, that *there might be no ſtrife betwixt them, becauſe they were brethren*, *Gen.* 13. 8.

That of our *Saviour* in his yielding to pay tribute for the avoiding of offence, to which in ſtrictneſs he was not obliged, *Mat.* 17. 27. He was the great *Exemplar* as of all others, ſo particularly of this Chriſtian grace. *I beſeech you brethren by the meekneſs and gentleneſs of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 10. 1.

St. *Paul* himſelf was as eminent for the practice of this duty, as for the preſſing of it upon others: In his *becoming all things to all men*, 1 Cor. 9. 22. and in *pleaſing all men in all things, not ſeek-*

ing

ing his own profit, but the profit of many that they might be saved, 1 *Cor.* 10. 33.

Suitable to this was that carriage of the *Council* of the *Apostles*, *Act.* 15. in their not insisting upon the strict right of things, but accommodating those Controversies of the Primitive times about the *Jewish* Rites, by such a Moderate expedient, as might most effectually heal and compose those differences.

There are two kinds of Reasons by which I would confirm the necessity of this duty; In respect of *God*, and *Man*.

1. In respect of *God*. { 1. *He is at hand.* 2. *He deals so with us.*

1. *He is at hand*; which is the Argument in the Text, *He is near*, being always *about our paths*, and *about our beds*, he *spies out all our goings*. He observes our carriage, to animadvert upon our failings, to assist and relieve us in our necessities, so that we need not fear any prejudice from others upon this account. If they shall from our Moderation be so much the more ready to injure us, He will be as ready to vindicate and reward us. *Psal.* 76. 9. *He will arise to* 1. *Reas.*

judgment, to save all the meek of the earth, here in this life. But besides, he is *near* in respect of that *final judgment* and account he will call us unto at the last:

Either { 1. *Particular.* / 2. *General.*

1. *Particular* at every man's death, that time cannot be far off. When a few days are come we must all *go to the place whence we shall not return.* Then all other things will forsake us and vanish away, and nothing will be of any real value to us, but the conscience of well-doing, which will go along with us, and abide with us for ever. Men are here apt to put the greatest estimate upon those things that concern their secular interests and advantages, whereas such matters will be of little use to us then: And 'tis usually mens being immersed in these lesser designs about some worldly selfish advantage that makes them more eager and fierce about other matters of difference.

They that are of a narrow contracted soul in respect of their possessions, have not usually any largeness or generosity of mind in reference to opinion.

2. He is *at hand* likewise in respect of

of his *general* judgment; when he will not only *judge the world in equity*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 98. 9. but for their equity likewiſe; when there ſhall be a particular account required of men for their works of *Mercy, Kindneſs and Pity*, and according as their carriage hath been in theſe reſpects here, ſo ſhall their condition be hereafter; when there ſhall be ſpecial notice taken of mens ſevere and rigorous demeanor in beating and inſulting over their fellow-ſervants. How can ſuch perſons anſwer it then, when they ſhall expect mercy for themſelves, and yet have not been ready to ſhew it to others? God hath told us that he will not forgive us here, without this readineſs to forgive our brethren; and therefore we have no reaſon to expect it from him hereafter.

2. Which brings me to the *ſecond* branch of this *firſt* Reaſon, We ſhould deal ſo with others becauſe *God deals ſo with us.* He is kind *to the unthankful and the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful:* 'Tis our Saviour's inference, *Luke* 6. 36. It were not poſſible that the world ſhould ſubſiſt one moment, if it were not that his mercy did moderate the rigor of his

juſtice. If he ſhould be *ſevere to mark what is done amiſs, who might abide it?* Every minute we deſerve hell, and might expect to be caſt into it. It is *becauſe his compaſſions fail not, that we are not conſumed.* He conſiders what we are able to do and to ſuffer; *He knows our frame, and remembers that we are but duſt*; He chaſtiſeth us with *the rod of a man*; and doth never *grieve willingly, or afflict the children of men:* And all this he doth upon this very ground, that we might from hence learn to deal ſo with others. The leſs gentle and moderate we are in our dealings with others, by ſo much the leſs ſenſe have we of the guilt and danger of our own ſins, and the leſs experience of God's love and mercy in the pardon of them.

That's a remarkable Parable to this purpoſe, *Mat.* 18 23. concerning the Servant who being indebted to his Lord ten thouſand Talents, was yet forgiven out of great compaſſion. After which he did notwithſtanding rigorouſly exact from his fellow-ſervant an hundred pence. You know what ſentence was paſſed upon him for it, *Serve nequam, v.* 32. *O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all thy debt; ſhouldſt thou not alſo have had*

had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

The *second* kind of *Reasons* which I proposed for the enforcing of this Duty, was in respect of *men*, with reference to whom this virtue of *Moderation* will appear to be a thing, 2. *Reas.*

I. Most *reasonable* and fitting *in it self*, considering,

the { *Fallibility of humane judgment.* / *Mutability of humane affairs.*

II. Most *beneficial* and advantageous for the good of men, both in

regard of { Our *own private* welfare. / The good of *humane Societies* in general.

I. 'Tis a thing most *reasonable* and fitting in it self, because of the *Fallibility* of humane judgment: And that not only from the impotence of our faculties, and the prejudices we are liable unto, upon the account of interests, which will strangely biass a man's judgment against clear evidence: But likewise from the difficulty and obscurity of things; there being δυσνόητα every-

where, not only in Nature and Scripture, but likewise in Political things, and the ordinary concernments of humane affairs, whether matters of Right, or of Fact: the most learned and inquisitive men many times differing in their judgments concerning matters of Right: and as for matters of Story and Fact that are variously reported, if a man hath not been an eye-witness of them himself, it cannot be but that he must give credit to them according to that esteem and opinion which he hath of the persons by whom they are related. All which put together shew how exceeding difficult and next to impossible it is, that men should ever agree in the same apprehension of things. There is no considering man who hath with any serious thoughts reflected upon the common state and condition of mankind in this respect, but must needs own and acknowlege the truth of that Saying, *Pauci res ipsas sequuntur, plures nomina rerum, plurimi nomina Magistrorum.*

The generality of men being carried away by the *Names* of Leaders and Parties, taking up opinions by the bulk and in the gross, as they are owned and professed by that Party of men amongst whom they are listed. Many

Many are ſwayed by the prejudice of the Names of things either for or againſt a thing. If an opinion or a deſign do but pretend to ſuch a Name, they do accordingly either receive or reject it, without examining how far it doth really promote or prejudice the thing they aim at.

And as for the *Nature* of things in themſelves, there are but few, very few, who ſet themſelves to any ſerious impartial inquiry concerning them.

Now I ſay, he that conſiders the manifold miſtakes which the judgments of men are liable unto upon theſe accounts, he muſt, unleſs he will go out of the world (as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks upon another occaſion) demean himſelf towards others, with this tenderneſs and moderation as to the things about which they differ.

2. From the *mutability* of Humane affairs, which in their moſt ſecure and flouriſhing eſtate are ſubject to revolutions: It being beyond the contrivance of humane wiſdom, to eſtabliſh things unto ſuch a fixedneſs as ſhall exempt them from change; but many times thoſe very courſes which wiſe men take for the ſetling and ſecuring of things,

and

and which may in themſelves have a natural aptitude to that purpoſe, are by the Providence of God made uſe of as the means and occaſions of trouble and change :

Ludit in humanis divina potentia rebus.

He that hath not yet learnt this leſſon upon the experience of all thoſe various revolutions we have ſeen in theſe latter Times, may deſerve to be taught it, as *Gideon* taught the men *of Succoth with briars and thorns*, *Judg.* 8. 16.

Nothing is more obvious to any obſerving man than this, That when revolutions have happened men make this their ſecurity and refuge, that they have in the former ſtate of things demeaned themſelves with moderation, and have by many kindneſſes and civilities obliged ſuch as differed from them. And this, if any thing can, redounds to their advantage afterwards, eſpecially if they have to do with ſuch as have any true greatneſs or generoſity of mind. Indeed if there were any certain way to fix the ſtate of things unto ſuch an immutable ſtability as could not alter, it would upon that account be more excuſable

ſable for a man to act with an uniform vigor and ſeverity againſt every one that differed. But ſuppoſing the meer poſſibility of change, nothing can be more irrational than to demean our ſelves ſo towards others with that harſhneſs and ſeverity as to render our ſelves incapable of receiving any kindneſs from them. I do not ſpeak this out of any compliance with that *Machiavilian* principle, which directs a man to engage no further in any good cauſe than he can ſafely retreat. Every worthy man ſhould with fidelity and courage aſſert the cauſe he is well perſwaded of; But it ſhould be without all kind of fierceneſs and bitterneſs againſt the perſons of others, with as much forbearance and gentleneſs as the nature of the thing will bear.

Conſidering that continual mutability which every condition is liable unto, and which no humane wiſdom can foreſee and prevent, that kind of demeanor is moſt rational, which may be moſt beneficial and ſafe as to our own particulars, and mutually beſt for all others. Which brings me to the other Branch of this *ſecond* Reaſon.

II. This

II. This virtue is moſt advantageous *for the good of men.*

1. In regard of every *mans private quiet and welfare* in particular. It will help to eſtabliſh a man's title to theſe earthly things both with reference to

His { Poſſeſſion / Fruition } of them.

Pſal. 37. 11. *The meek ſhall inherit the earth, and ſhall delight themſelves in the abundance of peace.* Which is afterward repeated by our *Saviour*, *Mat.* 5. 5. and again in another place, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and ye ſhall find reſt for your ſouls*, *Mat.* 11. 29. The moſt effectual means to attain unto a quiet ſtate of life with others, is to carry our ſelves gently and kindly to them, *v.* 7. of this Chapter, *And the peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Chriſt Jeſus.* 1 *Pet.* 3. 10. The *Apoſtle* having exhorted them to be *pitiful* and *courteous*, *not rendring evil for evil*, or *railing for railing, but contrariwiſe bleſſing*, he preſently ſubjoins, *he that will love life, and ſee good days, let him keep his tongue from evil, let him ſeek peace and enſue it.* And then preſently after, *Who is he that will harm*

harm you if you be followers of that which is good? No such way to render our lives quiet, comfortable and safe, as to demean our selves with candor and ingenuity towards those with whom we converse: And that not only in respect of the effects and consequences of such carriage, but from the nature of the thing it self; it supposeth a calm and sedate temper of mind. Whereas on the other side, that eagerness and fierceness of disposition, whereby a man is apt to be transported with heats and severity in matters of contest, as it doth suppose such æstuations and storms as are inconsistent with inward serenity, so likewise will it occasion outward trouble and opposition from others. They who are always biting of others, will be in continual danger of being devoured by others, *Gal.* 5. 15. Those two qualities of *hateful*, and *hating one another*, are joined together as usual concommitants, *Tit* 3. 3. they who are apt to demean themselves as *hating* of others, will thereby be rendred *hateful* to them.

2. This virtue will be very advantageous to the *peace* and welfare of *humane society* in the *general*, which doth very much depend upon the mutual con-

condeſcenſion and forbearance of men towards one another, in the things about which they differ: It being utterly impoſſible, conſidering the infirmity and prejudice to which our judgments are liable, that we ſhould always agree in the ſame apprehenſion of things. If upon every difference men ſhould think themſelves obliged to proſecute matters to the utmoſt heigth and rigor, ſuch eager perſons may eaſily from hence be induced to have recourſe to Arms rather than ſuch precious things as truth and juſtice ſhall ſuffer; and being once thus engaged, it will be impoſſible (if they will act conſiſtently) to end their differences by any accommodation, they muſt fight it out to the laſt, till one ſide be wholly ſubdued and deſtroyed. And thus would men grow wild and ſavage, the benefits of Society would be loſt, and mankind deſtroyed out of the world.

'Tis this moderation and calmneſs of ſpirit which takes men off from their natural wildneſs and ferity, which tames and fits them for ſociety. The leſs any man hath of it, the more doth he degenerate and draw near to the nature of brute creatures. The true notion of

Gentile-

Gentileneſs and *Nobility* conſiſting in theſe kind of qualifications, whereby a man is fitted for a ſociable condition.

Now the deſign of Chriſtianity being to promote the good of mankind, and the peace of Societies, therefore doth the Doctrine of it ſo frequently inſiſt upon thoſe kind of virtues and graces which are moſt conducible to this end. And therefore upon all theſe accounts the truth of the Doctrine will appear very evident, *viz.* That 'tis the duty of Chriſtians to give ſignal teſtimony of their equity and moderation upon all occaſions of difference and conteſts with one another.

There remains only one *Objection* to be briefly anſwered, and I ſhall proceed to *Application*. 'Tis this,

How may this conſiſt with that zeal and ſtrictneſs of duty which we are obliged unto?

To this it may be anſwered: 1. That zeal doth properly conſiſt in an intention of mind, and earneſtneſs of affection in the proſecuting of ſuch things as are our duty, and in oppoſing ſuch things whereby we are hindred in the per-

performance of our duty. Now ſuppoſing moderation to be a duty, a man ought to be zealous for this grace, and againſt all ſuch perſons and things as are enemies and hindrances of it. So that theſe things are not oppoſite, but conſiſtent with, and ſubſervient to one another.

And as for that other Branch of the Objection concerning ſtrictneſs and exactneſs of duty, from which a man ought not to deviate out of compliance with others. To this it may be ſaid, That ſtrictneſs is properly a keeping cloſe to the Law. Now 'tis not the naked letter, but the ſenſe and meaning that is the Law. And that man may be ſaid to be moſt ſtrict in his obedience, who doth moſt exactly comply with this. A man may violate the Law by obſerving the Letter, and he may keep the Law by going againſt the letter.

Now Divine Laws themſelves are capable of relaxation, which is the meaning of that Proverbial ſaying ſo frequent in Scripture, That God *will have mercy and not ſacrifice.* And therefore much more will humane Laws admit of it.

There are theſe three things I would inſiſt upon in the *Application* of this Point.

1. To

1. *First*, To enquire whether we our ſelves are ſuch as the *Apoſtle* doth here require Chriſtians to be.

2. And then *ſecondly*, if not, that we would endeavour to be convinced of that deformity and miſchief which there is in the want of this Grace.

3. *Laſtly*, that we would be perſuaded to be more careful in the attaining, improving and exerciſing of this Grace for the future.

1. To enquire whether we our ſelves are ſuch as the Apoſtle doth here require Chriſtians to be; ſuch as upon all occaſions of difference are ready to give ſignal teſtimony of our gentleneſs and moderation. There are theſe two ways whereby this may be diſcovered, namely, by the { *Fruits* and *Concomitants*. / *Univerſality* and extent of it.

1. By the *fruits* and *concomitants* of this virtue. Some have queſtioned whether this word do denote any ſingle virtue, and not rather a complexion of many together. 'Tis certain that there are ſeveral other virtues of near affinity to this, ſuch as are either the effects or concomitants of this virtue, by which

the reality of it may be known. Of theſe I ſhall mention *ſix.*

1. *Mutual forbearance* towards one another, not taking all the advantages we may have of vindicating our ſelves, making allowance for the infirmity of thoſe by whom we are injured. *We that are ſtrong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves, but our neighbour for his good: For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf,* Rom. 15. 1. We are to *comfort the feeble-minded, and to ſupport the weak,* 1 *Theſ.* 5. 14; not to be harſh and rigorous towards them.

2. A *readineſs to forgive* and conceal the manifeſt injuries of others, when either the glory of God or the good of men either publick or private ſhall require it of us. That very expreſſion which is tranſlated *ready to forgive, Pſal.* 89. 5. is by the *Septuagint* rendred by the ſame word in the Text, ὑπομονής.

3. *Long ſuffering*, both with reſpect to *Patience* and *Hope*; not eaſily provoked to paſſions, being ſlow to anger; not ſuddenly tired or diſcouraged by the continuance of the things we ſuffer, or the delay of the things we hope for. 1 *Cor.* 13. 4. *Charity ſuffereth long, and*

is

is kind. Verſ. 7. It beareth all things, hopeth all things.

4. *Benignity*, kindneſs, courteſy; a readineſs to do good, to help and ſhew favour to thoſe by whom we have been injured; ſuch an affable, amiable carriage as may win upon them; not harſh, ſcornful, churliſh; *overcoming evil with good*; a forwardneſs to promote love and peace with them, though it be by receding from ſomewhat of our own right. Being favourable in our interpretation of the words and actions of others. Approving what is good in them; not aggravating what is evil; taking doubtful matters in the beſt ſenſe; chuſing rather to offend by too much mildneſs than by too much ſeverity.

5. *Æquanimity*, meekneſs, gentleneſs; ſuch a ſedateneſs of mind, whereby a man is not eaſily tranſported to any high paſſions; not difficultly appeaſed, eſpecially upon ſubmiſſion and repentance. Such an evenneſs and ſmoothneſs of diſpoſition, as doth not only ſerve to attemper anger, but to add a ſweetneſs and placidneſs to our carriage. An equal ſtate of mind under the variety of outward conditions, without being elated or dejected by them; *Knowing how to*

want, and how to abound. When our hearts are not immerſed in any of theſe earthly things, beyond their real worth and uſefulneſs.

6. And *laſtly, Eaſineſs to be intreated*; when a man is exorable without the violence of importunity; Not ſtiff and tenacious in matters of opinion beyond what the great evidence and importance of things doth require. Managing the buſineſs of our converſe with others, *without murmurings and diſputings, Phil.* 2. 14. This ſame diſputacity, or aptneſs to contend for victory, is no ſmall occaſion of diſcord amongſt men. And on the contrary, this willingneſs to condeſcend, not leaning too much to our own underſtanding, is a ſpecial means to promote amity and peace amongſt them. This very word in the Text being uſed by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 3. 3. is there by *Beza* interpreted to be of the ſame ſenſe with συγγνωμονικὸς, apt to yield and to ſubmit, *non facilè contentioſus*, not eaſily provoked to contentious diſputes, nor pertinacious in them.

Let a man look over the whole Doctrine of the Goſpel in the *New Teſtament*, and he ſhall find that there is not any

any other virtue or duty whatſoever ſo often and ſo earneſtly inculcated as thoſe of this nature; as if our Saviour had deſigned to fix upon theſe, as being the grand *Criteria* whereby his Followers ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from all other Sects and Profeſſions of men in the world.

Now if we deſire to make enquiry concerning our own conditions in this reſpect, theſe are ſome of thoſe *Concomitants*, effects, properties, whereby this moderation is to be diſcerned.

2. Another Rule whereby we may examine our conformity to this precept in the *Text*, is the *Univerſality* and extent of it; whether we exerciſe it towards all men, in all times, upon all occaſions. They that are for moderation in the managing of affairs at one time, and yet perhaps at another will look upon it as an argument of diſaffection, and ſtile it by the name of lukewarmneſs and deteſtable neutrality, ſuch perſons cannot be ſaid to love the *virtue* of Moderation, but the *bleſſing* and happineſs of it. They are only for the paſſive, not the active part; to receive it from others, not to ſhew it to them. And to how narrow a compaſs

an enquiry by this Rule will confine this Grace, amidſt the ſeveral pretenders to it, I need not ſay.

2. In the next place we may hence be convinced of that deformity and miſchief which there is in the want of this Grace. It renders a man,

1. *Unlike to God.*
2. *Unacceptable to men.*
3. *Pernicious to himſelf.*

1. It renders a man *unlike to God*; in conformity to whom all our excellency and happineſs doth conſiſt. He is *the Father of Mercies, the God of all conſolation.* His appearance was in *the ſoft and ſtill voice*, 1 *King.* 19. 10, 11; not in whirlwinds and Hurricanes: where there is *ſpiritus procellæ*, it proceeds from another principle. Chriſt is the *Prince of peace*, the great Exemplar of meekneſs. 'Tis propheſied of him, that he ſhall *come down like dew on a fleece of wool, like rain on the mown graſs, Pſal.* 72. 6. *He ſhall not cry, nor his voice be heard in the ſtreet, Iſa.* 42. 2. The Holy Ghoſt was pleaſed to appear in the ſhape of a Dove, the emblem of Meekneſs. *Simplex animal & lætum, non felle amarum, non morſibus ſævum, non unguium laceratione violentum.* The true Church

St. Cypr. de Unit. Eccleſ.

is

is ſtiled by the name of the *Lilly amongſt thorns:* the Lilly doth not ſcratch and tear, that's the property of thorns and briars. Chriſtians are the Sheep and Lambs. *Quid facit in pectore Chriſtiano luporum geritas, Canum rabies?* ſaith the ſame *Father.*

2. *Unacceptable to men*; as being againſt that common peace and quiet which 'tis every mans intereſt to promote. It ſeems very obvious for men to reflect what thoughts they have had concerning ſuch perſons as have been the chief drivers on of ſeveral intereſts, in thoſe wild revolutions we have ſeen of late; how we have looked upon them as Incendiaries and enemies to publick peace. If it be ſaid, that the caſe is now altered, and we have a right ſide; and a good cauſe; This ought to be moſt freely owned, and acknowledged with all thankfulneſs: But yet 'tis farther conſiderable, that this virtue of Moderation, doth ſuppoſe a matter of right and juſtice. And then beſides, the better the cauſe is, the leſs need is there of any immoderate rigorous courſe in the aſſerting of it. We ſhall hereby rather prejudice than promote it; by inducing a ſuſpicion, that 'tis not ſo much truth or

juſtice as ſomething elſe that drives us on. And then beſides, where would this principle end? if one man may be ſevere and rigorous becauſe he is in the right; why then another who doth but think himſelf ſo, will be ſo too. And according to this, what would become of peace and ſociety?

Such bluſtering boiſterous tempers as are all for the great river *Euphrates*, which runs with a torrent and a mighty noiſe, and refuſe the ſtill waters of *Shiloah*, which *run ſoft and gently*, as the *Prophet* ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 8. 6. ſuch are no friends to peace, becauſe 'tis the latter which is the river whoſe ſtreams muſt *make glad the City of God, Pſal.* 46. 4. that is, muſt promote the quiet and flouriſhing ſtate of the Church, as a Reverend *Prelate* hath elegantly expreſt it: 'Tis the advice of *Seneca*, that men would conſider *Utrum mundi ſtatus gradior ſit, ſereno & puro die, an cum fragoribus crebis omnia quatiuntur, & ignes hinc atq; illinc micant.* What difference there is betwixt a ſerene and clear day, and another full of thunder, and flaſhes, and ſtorms; Such difference there is, ſaith he, betwixt a calm moderate temper, and the paſſionate ſeverity of others.

Biſhop *Andrews* Sermon.

3. It

3. It would prove *pernicious to a man's ſelf*. For which I ſhall only give that one inſtance, *Luke* 9. 55. the two Diſciples there, *James* and *John*, thoſe *Sons of thunder*, being much offended with the *Samaritans*, who refuſed to receive our Saviour, would needs in their immoderate zeal have fire from Heaven to deſtroy them; For which they had a Scripture-example in the ſtory of *Elias*. But what muſt have been the conſequence of this? Why a while after our Saviour went up to *Jeruſalem*, where he was Crucified, and therefore very good reaſon why fire ſhould come upon that likewiſe. Nay theſe very perſons themſelves, *James* and *John*, deſert and renounce him, and therefore there ought to be fire upon them alſo; And ſo they make good that ſaying of the wiſe man, and by being *righteous overmuch deſtroy themſelves*, *Eccleſ.* 7. 7. Nay one of theſe Diſciples tells us, *Joh.* 1. 10, 11. *That the world knew him not, nor received him.* Therefore why ſhould not that likewiſe be deſtroyed by fire? Of ſuch a large and comprehenſive miſchief is this ſin, according to the natural conſequences of it.

3. Laſtly,

3. Laſtly, We ſhall hence be perſwaded to be more careful in the attaining, improving, exerciſing of this grace for the future. 'Tis a duty this, wherein all ſorts of perſons are concerned, not only thoſe of a private condition in their dealings with one another, but likewiſe ſuch as are publick Magiſtrates, both as to their making and executing of Laws. They who are to conſult publick ſettlement, ſhould have ſpecial regard to this equity and moderation, thereby to heal the minds of men, and to compoſe their differences. They ſhould look upon paſt ſufferings as happening to them, *eo modo quo grandines ac diluvia accidere ſolent*, and ſo bury them in oblivion.

I might to the many arguments already mentioned, add divers other conſiderations to excite men unto this virtue (would the time permit it). I cannot omit that paſſage out of *Seneca*, ſo proper to this purpoſe, *Quod ſi dii placabiles & æqui delicta potentium non ſtatim fulminibus proſequuntur, quanto æquius eſt, homines hominibus præpoſitos miti animo exercere imperium.* *If God doth not preſently take vengeance of our faults with thunder from heaven, why ſhould not men*

by

by his example become gentle and mild towards one another. 'Tis a thought this, very proper for a man to revolve in his mind when he is by his paſſion provoked to deal with rigor and extremity towards others. Let him then conſider, Am not I more under God's power than this offending perſon is under mine; more obnoxious to his wrath and juſtice than he is to me? Had he dealt with me according to my deſert, I had long ago been caſt into Hell: Yet I live and am ſpared, and do every day receive many teſtimonies of his kindneſs. Is he thus favourable to me for this end, that I may be ſevere and cruel to others? Hath he forgiven my Talents, that I may rigorouſly exact the pence from my brother? That man who hath but any ſparks of Religion or ingenuity, cannot chuſe but be either overwhelmed with confuſion, or melted into compaſſion by ſuch thoughts as theſe.

The End of the Thirteenth Sermon.

The

The Fourteenth Sermon.

Rom. XII. 19.

Dearly beloved, avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto wrath: For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord.

I HAVE treated of late in a former Diſcourſe concerning the virtue of *Moderation*; ſhewing the true nature and neceſſity of it, and how ſeaſonable and proper the preſſing of it hath been, and will continually be for all places and times; And more particularly for ſuch as in any revolution are apt to think it leaſt ſeaſonable, who for that very reaſon have more need to be put in remembrance of their duty in this particular.

Now becauſe this other ſubject of Revenge is of near affinity to it; being in ſome ſenſe the object of it, according

to

to that definition of *Seneca* where he describes Clemency and Moderation to be *Temperantia animi in potestate Ulciscendi*; A temperance of mind when we have the power and opportunity of revenge; Therefore I could not but judge it a very proper Subject to be annexed to the former, and this Text as proper to found a discourse upon of this nature, as any other.

In the former part of this *Epistle*, the *Apostle* had insisted at large upon several points of Faith, more particularly upon that great Doctrine of Justification. In this *Chapter* he proceeds to lay down certain precepts of Christianity concerning practice and obedience, beginning with those that refer *to God*, in the three first *verses*: And amongst them, with that which is the foundation of all the rest, namely, that we wholly devote and resign up our selves unto his spiritual service, *v.* 1.

Then he proceeds to such duties as we owe to our *Neighbours*, whether, 1. Those that are fellow-members of the same Church, partakers of the same faith; from *ver.* 4. to the 13. Or *2dly*, such as are enemies and persecutors, *v.* 14. *Bless them which persecute you*; and again, *v.* 17.

v. 17. *Recompence to no man evil for evil.* And becauſe 'tis a duty (this) of more than ordinary difficulty, very much againſt the natural inclinations of men, therefore he returns again to the enforcing of it, in the words of the *Text*, and ſo to the end of the *Chapter*.

The *Text* is a Diſſuaſive from the ſin of *Revenge*; in it there lye four particulars very obvious:

1. An inſinuating compellation, *Dearly beloved.*

2. The Precept or Prohibition it ſelf, *Avenge not your ſelves.*

3. A direction for the better obſervance of this precept, *But rather give place unto wrath.*

4. A Reaſon or Argument for the enforcing of it, *For it is written, Vengeance is mine,* or *belongs to me, I will repay, ſaith the Lord.*

I ſhall briefly explain the ſeveral *Terms*.

1. The *Compellation*; ἀγαπητοὶ, *Dearly beloved.* 'Tis but one word in the *Greek*, but becauſe of the ſpecial *Emphaſis* of it, ſignifying the moſt cordial love, therefore it is thus rendred in the *Engliſh*. And upon this account 'tis uſually aſcribed to an only child; ſo the 70 tran-

tranſlate that place, *Gen.* 22. 2. *Thine only Son, thy dearly beloved Son.* In which ſenſe 'tis frequently uſed by other *Greek* Authors, *Homer*, *Plutarch*, and others (as divers *Criticks* have obſerved.) It ſignifies the deareſt and moſt intimate affection. The *Apoſtle* doth uſe it both here and in ſeveral other places, that by ſo mild and obliging a compellation he might the better inſinuate and prevail with thoſe whom he is to perſuade: Suitable to his own rule, *In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves.*

2. The *Precept* or *Prohibition* it ſelf, μὴ ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδικοῦντες, *non voſmet ipſos defendentes.* So the *Vulgar*, very improperly both as to the force of the word and the ſcope of the place. There are two particulars to be enquired into for the explication of this clauſe:

What is meant by { *Revenging.* / *Revenging our ſelves.*

1. What this ἐκδίκησις, *Ultio* or *Vindicta* is, may be very proper to be diſcuſſed, becauſe 'tis by ſeveral *Authors* uſed in ſuch various and equivocal ſenſes, ſometimes for a paſſion of the mind; ſo *Plato* defines it in his Book *de Legibus*, *Vindicta eſt paſſio juſtitiæ ſequax*; ſometimes

times for a *virtue*, amongſt the Catalogue of which *Ariſtotle* doth reckon it, *Eth. lib.* 4. And ſo likewiſe *Aquinas* 2æ. 2dæ, making the two extremes of it to be cruelty, and too much remiſſion or abjectneſs. And ſometimes likewiſe 'tis reckoned for a *vice*, as in the *Text*. and according to the moſt uſual acception of the word. And there is reaſon enough why it may be referred to each of theſe heads, becauſe ſuppoſing it to be the firſt, a *Paſſion*, it muſt likewiſe be capable of being both a Virtue and a Vice.

As there is in every man a natural inclination to vindicate himſelf from injuries, ſo 'tis a *Paſſion* that is a natural act of the appetite. As this paſſion is duly guided in the exerciſe of its acts, by the rules of juſtice and prudence, both as to the proper objects, acts and circumſtances of it, ſo 'tis a *virtue*. As it doth deviate from, and tranſgreſs theſe rules, ſo 'tis a *vice*. Which may be ſaid of all the other paſſions likewiſe, *Anger*, *Love*, *Fear*, &c. Though becauſe of the general proclivity of men to offend in this kind, therefore the moſt ordinary uſe of the word is in this worſt ſenſe.

That desire which a man may have of occasioning to another some trouble and inconvenience upon the account of injury suffered from him, this is not absolutely and abstractedly considered, in it self evil, but may be both lawful and commendable, provided that the thing hereby chiefly aimed at be such a moderate castigation as may be requisite for the conviction and the amendment of the offender, a keeping up the authority of Laws, and a due satisfaction for the damages we have suffered. There being a vast difference betwixt the *study of revenge*, and the *endeavour of reparation*. This latter being no ways opposite to Christian love, meekness, mutual forgiveness; God himself may remit the sin, and not hate the person, and yet he may correct the offender, to vindicate his Law, and repair his own Honour.

But now on the other hand, when the thing we chiefly aim at, is mischief to the person by whom we have been injured, though we our selves receive no benefit thereby, besides the satisfaction of our own inraged passions: Such a *wrathful retribution of evil* is properly the *sin* of *Revenge*; whether or no the evil

evil that we occaſion to him, be either greater, or equal, or leſs, to what we have ſuffered from him.

2. What by *revenging our ſelves*? This expreſſion doth direct to the proper agent of that ſuffering and penalty which we may occaſion to another. Though perſons of a private capacity may ſeek to bring ſuch as injure them to puniſhment, yet they muſt not themſelves inflict it, becauſe there are others appointed to this work, namely the publick Magiſtate, whoſe proper office this is, *He is the Miniſter of God*, a *revenger*, ἔκδικος, the ſame word as in the Text, *to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*, ſaith the *Apoſtle* in the next *Chapter*, *Rom.* 13. 4. 'tis a part this of diſtributive juſtice, and therefore doth belong to Governours, either to the Supreme, to whom it doth primarily appertain, or to thoſe who are delegated by him; who are the Conſervators of humane Societies, and Guardians of Laws. Without ſuch revengers there could be no government in the world; and therefore for private perſons to invade their office, is in ſome ſenſe to depoſe them, and conſequently to deſtroy Government. Though even ſuch pub-

lick perſons to whoſe office this work doth properly belong, are not altogether exempted from the danger of this ſin. Upon which account it is that Governours themſelves ought not ordinarily to be Judges in their own particular concernments; or at leaſt not to be the inflicters of the penalty upon ſuch as injure them. To which may be added, that ſuch Magiſtrates who take delight in inflicting puniſhment as puniſhment; who do it with inſolence, bitterneſs, contumely (which are againſt the common Laws of humanity) ſuch as do not principally reſpect the good of the Community, and of the offending perſon, but have ſome ſecret regard to their own private utility, or the ſatisfaction of their particular anger: In ſuch caſes the Magiſtrate himſelf, whoſe office it is to revenge, may yet be guilty of the ſin of revenge.

3. The third particular obſerved in the words, is a *Direction* for the better obſervance of this duty, in that clauſe, *but rather give place unto wrath.* That expreſſion of *giving place*, δότε τόπον, *date locum*, is a Metaphorical phraſe. But 'tis ſuch a Metaphor as is not a peculiar Phraſeology, but is ſomewhat general and

and ſignificant in ſeveral languages. The meaning of it is to yield and ſubmit unto. What kind of wrath is hereby intended, is another queſtion, fit to be diſcuſſed. There are three ſeveral ſenſes that have each of them a fair pretence to the ſcope and meaning of this place.

1. It may ſignify the wrath of thine *enemy*; do not immediately fly to an oppoſition of it, but rather withdraw from him that is provoked. *Dum furor in curſu eſt, currenti cede furori.* *Jacob* did ſo to his brother *Eſau*, when he was inraged againſt him, and reſolved to kill him.

2. It may ſignify the wrath of *God*. Do not prevent or hinder *that* by revenging your ſelf. Take heed of invading his Office. Leave him to his own work. *Commit your ſelves to him that judgeth righteouſly*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 23.

3. It may refer to our *own wrath*. To the impetuouſneſs of which we muſt ſo far give place, as not to act any thing upon the inſtigation of it. *Reſpirate in veſtro furore, neque ruite præcipites, donec ira veſtra deferveat.* Let it have ſome time to cool and abate, and take heed of being tranſported with it.

Each of theſe are ſuitable enough to the ſenſe of the place, though the *two* firſt ſeem to be more agreeable to the Reaſon annexed.

4. Which is the fourth particular obſervable in the words, *For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord,* Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, which refers to that place, *Deut.* 32. 35. and to that *Pſal.* 94. 1. *O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth.* Which is again repeated *Heb.* 10. 30. *For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, ſaith the Lord.*

And then it follows in the next *verſe* of the *Text*, which is cited out of *Prov.* 25. 21. *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirſt give him drink.* Under which expreſſions of meat and drink are comprehended all kind of neceſſaries or conveniences which his condition may require. Be kind and benevolous to him, not only in caſe of extreme exigence, but ſo often as you have opportunity of procuring any conſiderable advantage to his condition, *For in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire upon his head*, whereby he ſhall be either melted into kindneſs, or burnt for his obdurateneſs.

Some

Some think the meaning of this paſſage is to be reſtrained only to the firſt of theſe; it being againſt the chief ſcope of the place, and the higheſt kind of revenge for a man to aim at the expoſing of another to divine wrath and vengeance; uſually the roughеſt moſt obdurate tempers are to be ſubdued with kindneſs. *David* conquered *Saul* this way, and melted him into tears of repentance for his enmity againſt him. *Nimis durus eſt animus, qui ſi dilectionem nolit impendere, nolit rependere*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*. That man muſt needs be of a very ſavage inflexible temper, who is not to be bent by gentleneſs and kindneſs. Some conceive this phraſe to be an alluſion to the cuſtom of Artificers in their dealing with metals, which when they cannot bring to fuſion by putting fire under them, they uſe to heap live coals on the head or top of them, and by that means do cauſe them to melt. That man is to be utterly deſpaired of, as being without all ſenſe of humanity, whom repeated kindneſs will not melt and diſſolve. *Dr. Hammond.*

But now becauſe the moſt uſual ſenſe of this expreſſion, *coals of fire*, doth denote puniſhment and vengeance, accor-

ding to the proper importance of it in other Scriptures, as *Pſal.* 18. 8, 12, 13. and 140. 12. and ſeveral other places; Therefore this ſenſe is not to be wholly neglected, nor is it unlawful for a man in a ſecondary way to have reſpect unto it. And 'tis moſt ſuitable to that clauſe in the precedent verſe *Vengeance is mine.* Though withal it muſt be granted, that the precept in the verſe immediately following, of overcoming evil with good, doth ſeem to favour more the former ſenſe.

And ſo much for Explication of the *Text*, both as to the *Context*, and the *Terms* of it.

The *Propoſition* I would inſiſt upon ſhall be this:

Prop. *Chriſtians ought to be very cautious againſt this ſin of revenge.*

The *Apoſtle* doth in this place inſiſt much upon it, frequently repeats the prohibition to this purpoſe, which he endeavours to inſinuate by the moſt loving perſuaſions, and to enforce by ſeveral arguments, to ſhew of how great moment and conſequence this duty is. And 'tis withal both agreeable to the light of nature, and to ſeveral other precepts and examples, both in the *Old* and *New* Teſtament. And

And *first*, 'tis most consonant this to the clear light of nature, and such moral principles as are common to all mankind. Though I know very well, that divers eminent *Authors*, the learned *Grotius*, and others, do from hence endeavour to prove the insufficiency of Reason and Philosophy for the discovery and attainment of true virtue. Because the wisest and best of the *Heathen* do indulge themselves in this matter of revenge. To which purpose they usually cite those sayings out of *Aristotle*, where he reckons it for a virtue, and in another place where he saith, *Servile est, si contumelioſe tracteris, id tolerare.* And that of *Cicero*, where he mentions revenge amongst those things, *Quæ ad jus naturæ pertinent.* Besides that Doctrine of the *Stoicks*, who were a sect of men most strict and sublime in their morality; amongst whom notwithstanding it was a principle, *Sapientem non ignoscere, non misereri.* That *a wise man ought not to pardon another man's faults, nor to compassionate his sufferings.* For which *Seneca* reasons thus, *Venia est pœnæ meritæ remissio. Ergo ei ignoscitur qui puniri debuit. Sapiens autem nihil facit quod non debet.* To which may be added

De Clemen-tia. 2. 6.

added that Doctrine of the *Alchoran*, wherein the remitting of injuries, and neglect of revenge, is condemned as an impious thing.

From all which 'tis inferred, that this prohibition of revenge is a pure institution belonging to the Gospel, and Christian Religion, and not derivable from the light of nature.

But with reverence to those great Names, this will upon an impartial inquiry be found to be a mistake; all the *Agenda* of Christianity being so far from being opposite, that they are most agreeable to humane reason, as 'tis cultivated and heightned to its utmost improvement by Philosophy. As for those speeches that are cited to this purpose, they may refer to the *passion* or *virtue* of Revenge, not the *vice* of it. The same *Authors* abounding in many severe prohibitions against this *vice*. Besides the many arguments they produce of the unlawfulness and mischief of it, as the inconsistency of it with Government and Society, with several other reasons which I may have occasion to mention afterwards. And the plain truth is, there is not any one thing in morality that is capable of being made out by clearer natural

natural evidence, than the ſinfulneſs of revenge, ſuppoſing men to live under Laws and Government, as I ſhall hereafter endeavour to ſhew.

As for *Scripture*-evidence to this purpoſe out of the *Old* Teſtament, nothing can be more expreſs than that place, *Levit.* 19. 18. *Thou ſhalt not avenge nor bear any grudge againſt the children of thy people, but thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf.* To which is annexed the ſame reaſon as in the Text, *I am the Lord.* Nor is this to be extended meerly to their perſons, but to their poſſeſſions likewiſe. *Exod* 23. 4, 5. *If thou meet thine enemies ox or his aſs going aſtray, thou ſhalt ſurely bring it back to him again. If thou ſeeſt the aſs of him that hateth thee, lying under his burden, thou ſhalt ſurely help with him.*

Though it cannot be denied, that amongſt the judicial Laws of the *Jewiſh* Nation, there are ſome that ſeem to make an allowance and indulgence for the frowardneſs and hardneſs of that people in this particular (whether the revenger of blood were not commanded to kill the manſlayer, ſee *Weemes*, 2. *Vol.* 2. *part*, *p.* 129.) as that concerning the liberty for the avenger of blood, while

while his heart is hot, to purſue him that had unwittingly ſlain his neighbour, and if he could overtake him before he got to one of the Cities of Refuge, to be revenged of him, *Deut.*19 6. *Joſh.* 20. 3. Beſides thoſe other Laws of retaliation, of *an eye for an eye,* and *a tooth for a tooth*; yet theſe Laws were not eſtabliſhed amongſt them out of any fitneſs or commendableneſs of the things in themſelves abſolutely conſidered, but only indulged by way of permiſſion, as being moſt ſuitable to the imperfect ſtate of that people, and for the prevention of greater miſchiefs amongſt them, as *Tertullian* hath ſtated this buſineſs, and out of him the learned *Grotius* in his Book *de jure belli & pacis, Lib.* 2. *Cap.* 20. §. 10.

*Prov.*19.11.the wiſe man tells us,that *'tis the diſcretion of a man to defer his anger, and his glory to paſs over a tranſgreſſion.* 'Tis the want of prudence and generoſity that doth haſtily tranſport men to the retribution of injuries.

Prov. 24. 17, 18. *Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he ſtumbleth, Leſt the Lord ſee it, and it diſpleaſe him, and he turn away his wrath from him to thee.* Where not

not only the doing of miſchief our ſelves, but the rejoicing at that which upon any other account doth happen to him, is prohibited as an unworthy thing. And *David* complains of it as very injurious dealing, that his enemies *rejoiced at his adverſity*, *Pſal.* 35. 15. though he *had compaſſion on them when they were ſick, and behaved himſelf as to his friend or brother.*

Ezek. 25. 12. there are ſevere threatnings denounced againſt *Edom*, becauſe he had greatly offended by taking vengeance, and revenging himſelf upon the houſe of *Judah*, *ver.* 14. *Therefore will I lay my vengeance upon Edom, according to mine anger, and according to my fury, and they ſhall know my vengeance, ſaith the Lord God.* And *ver.* 15. *Becauſe the Philiſtines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a deſpiteful heart, to deſtroy it for the old hatred; therefore thus ſaith the Lord, Behold, I will ſtretch out my hands againſt the Philiſtines, and I will execute great vengeance upon them, with furious rebukes.*

But the *Goſpel* is much more copious to this purpoſe, wherein our Saviour doth require an higher degree of perfection in this kind, and doth aboliſh thoſe indul-

indulgences which the *Judicial Law* did admit. He expects that *Christians* should be so far from being overcome with this passion of private revenge, that they should rather suffer patiently a second and third injury, than revenge one. Which is the true meaning of that precept, *Mat.* 5. 39. *Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.* That expression of *turning the cheek*, being a usual Scripture-phrase to signify bearing evil patiently, *Isa.* 50. 6. *Lament.* 3. 30.

And *v.* 44. *I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. For if you love them that love you, what reward have you? do not even Publicans and sinners the same?* But when once you come to love and do good to enemies, this will prove you to be *children* Luk. 6. 35 *of the Highest*, and render you *perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect*, *ver.* 48.

Mat. 6. Having taught his Disciples that form of prayer, wherein they are to beg a conditional pardon of their own sins, *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

Of

Of which it may be ſaid (as of the fifth Commandment, that it was the *firſt with promiſe)* ſo was this the *firſt*, the only Petition *with condition*. And having ſignified this form, he returns immediately after to comment upon this clauſe (ſingling it out from all the other Petitions, as laying great weight upon it) and this he doth both *poſitively*, *ver.* 14. *For if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, then will your Heavenly Father forgive you your treſpaſſes.* And *negatively*, v. 15. *But if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your treſpaſſes.* By which place it appears, that he who meditates revenge, muſt curſe himſelf when he prays; he muſt carry in his own boſom the evidence that his ſins are unpardoned, and likewiſe a bar and incapacity, whereby he is diſabled to ask or expect the forgiveneſs of them.

To which may be added that Precept of *being reconciled to our brother before we bring our gift to the Altar*, *Mat.* 5. The thoughts of revenge will render our offerings and ſervices unacceptable. As likewiſe that *Parable* concerning the *wicked ſervant*, *Mat.* 18. who refuſed to forgive his fellow-ſervant

vant a *hundred pence*, though his Lord had remitted to him *ten thousand Talents.*

I might mention several Examples to this purpose; that of *Joseph* towards his Berthren: that of *Job, Chap.* 31. 29. who professed that he *rejoiced not at the destruction of him that hated him; nor lift up himself when evil found him.* That of St. *Stephen*, who prayed for those that stoned him, saying, *Lord lay not this sin to their charge, Acts* 7. 60. And above all, that of our *Saviour* himself, *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*, 1 Pet. 2. 23.

I proceed to some *Reasons* or Arguments for the confirmation of this *Proposition*; And shall mention *six.*

1. *'Tis a sin against God*, the supreme Governour of the world, to whom this work of vengeance belongeth; which is the reason in the *Text.* And therefore men who intrude upon it without his commission, do but invade his Office; and consequently renounce their subjection to him, and put themselves out of his protection. We that are poor dependant Creatures, earthen vessels,

worms

worms and no men, think our ſelves highly injured and affronted when thoſe that are in any inferior relation to us, our children or ſervants, ſhall take upon them to revenge themſelves upon one another without appealing to us to do them right. Why, God is infinitely more juſt, powerful, omniſcient, and therefore hath much more reaſon to reſent it as an high indignity, when his creatures and vaſſals ſhall ſo far forget their dependance upon him as to invade his office. The *Apoſtle* tells us, *Jam.* 1. 20. *That the wrath of men worketh not the righteouſneſs of God.* That juſtice which is done by a wrathful man, doth not render him righteous in the ſight of God. Or God hath not appointed that violent revengeful diſpoſition of men to be the executor of his juſtice; becauſe 'tis not like to effect it with ſuch a mixture of mercy as he will approve or accept of.

2. 'Tis *againſt Government*, Magiſtrates, Laws; thoſe bonds of Societies, which are all needleſs and in vain, if every one may take a liberty of righting himſelf. 'Tis the very end of Magiſtracy to prevent this. He is made

a publick Avenger, to diſtribute rewards and puniſhments according to ſtated Laws, that private men might not intermeddle with it. 'Tis true indeed, as for ſuch barbarous ſavage people as live wild, without being aſſociated and united by thoſe bonds of juſtice, 'tis no wonder if ſuch be continually retaliating of injuries according to the opportunities and advantages they can get over one another; there being no other remedy for men, who live according to a ſtate of nature, amongſt whom there is no perſon or place for appeal. And thus likewiſe is it with ſuch publick perſons, betwixt whom there is no common Judge to ſtate and vindicate their differences (as Soveraign Princes are) there being in ſuch caſes no other remedy (unleſs they can accommodate things by Treaty) but that War muſt follow, and the ſword decide their Controverſies. But when men are once aſſociated under Government and Laws, they muſt then have recourſe to ſuch as are deputed to this office of vindicating common juſtice. Have you received an injury, ſaith *Quintilian*, *Eſt lex, forum, judex*

Judex niſi vos jure vindicari pudet; *There are Laws, Courts, Judges, unleſs your cauſe be ſuch as you are aſhamed or afraid to bring it unto the trial and determination of Law.* Though even in this way 'tis not for every trivial offence that we are to trouble our neighbour; nor for matters of moment, till all other ways of accommodation have been firſt offered and tried, *Law being a kind of War, which muſt be the laſt means for Peace.*

3. 'Tis againſt the very ſcope and *ſpirit of Chriſtianity*, which conſiſts in ſelf-denial, taking up the Croſs, meekneſs, loving our enemies, forgiving ſuch as treſpaſs againſt us. The great rule of Chriſtianity is not to do to others as they do to us, but as we would have them do to us. *Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do you the ſame unto them, Mat.* 7. 12.

4. 'Tis againſt *humanity*; *Inhumanum verbum eſt ultio*, ſaith *Seneca*. 'Tis proper enough for wild brute creatures, but not for men. Nothing becomes humane nature more than gentleneſs and humanity. *Laus humanitatis potius quam voluptas ultionis concupiſcenda* Quintil.

eſt, ſaith one of the *Roman* Orators. *The pleaſure of revenge ought not to ſtand in any competition with the praiſe of humanity.* Nothing is more univerſally neceſſary for the peace and welfare of humane Societies, than mutual pardon and forbearance; becauſe every one muſt frequently ſtand in need of it for himſelf, and therefore muſt be ready to extend it to others. He that hath any real ſenſe of his own frail condition, will find reaſon enough not to take all advantages he may againſt others.

5. 'Tis *againſt our own quiet* and welfare; which conſiſts in ſuch a ſerene and becalmed ſpirit as will not *let the Sun go down upon our wrath.* The ſtudy of revenge will be a means to keep wounds green and feſtering, whereas otherwiſe they might heal. *Multi leves injurias altius ſibi dimiſcere dum vindicant.* This gives impreſſion to a ſlight injury, and makes it wound deep when we reſent it with revengeful thoughts. *Maledicta, ſi iraſcaris, agnita videntur, ſpreta exoleſcunt.* He that neglects an injury, doth blunt the edge of it. *Provoking words* (ſaith the Son of *Syrach*, *Eccleſ.*

Senec.

Eccles. 28. 12.) *are like a coal of fire, which if a man blow upon, it will kindle the more; but if he spit upon it, 'twill go out.*

Besides; that it will be a means to multiply and renew fresh injuries upon us. If we cannot stop at the first blow, why should we expect that our adversary should stop at the second? He that will strike when he is not provoked, will do so much more when he is smitten again, and so we shall but help to draw the saw of contention, and multiply sufferings upon our selves, by endeavouring to retaliate them upon others.

6. Revenge is in it self as great, and in many respects a much greater sin, than the first injury whereby 'tis occasioned. *Quid refert inter provocantem & provocatum, nisi quod ille prior in maleficio deprehenditur, & ille posterior. All the difference betwixt the provoker and revenger is this, That the one is first, the other second in the mischief. Et quid refert primus peccet an ultimus? And what advantage is there for a man to be first or second in an evil action?* It cannot certainly be any good argument, that be- *Tertul.* de Patientia.

cauſe ſuch an one ſinned firſt, therefore we will ſecond him: *Qui dolorem regerit tantum excuſatius peccat* (ſaith *Seneca*) *He that doth revenge, doth ſin as well as the other, though he have this excuſe for it, that he was firſt provoked to it.* And yet in another place he ſaith, *Non dubitabo dicere magis improbum eſſe eum; qui illatam ulciſcitur quam qui infert injuriam. I ſhall not doubt to affirm that man of the two to be the moſt wicked, who revenges, than he who inflicts an injury. Qui replicat multiplicat. Alter principium malo dedit, alter modum abſtulit. One gives a beginning, the other growth, multiplication, continuance, and conſequently endeavours to make it without meaſure or end.* The firſt violates ſome particular branch of the Law, but the revenge of that wrong doth depoſe the whole Law, and puts it out of Office. He that hath newly received an injury, and hath the ſenſe of it freſh upon his own mind, doth thereby better underſtand the vexation and grievouſneſs of it; and therefore for him to deal hardly with others, whilſt he hath this ſenſe freſh upon him, muſt needs from hence receive an aggravation, *Qui exemplo peccat, bis peccat,*

De Ira.

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he having immediately before experimented the deformity and miſchief of that ſin in another.

If it be objected againſt all this which hath been delivered, that we read ſometimes in *Scripture* of good men who are ſaid to rejoice at the ſight of vengeance upon others, *Pſal.* 58. 10. *The righteous ſhall rejoice when he ſeeth the vengeance.* And elſewhere they are ſaid to pray for vengeance, *Jer.* 11. 20. *O Lord of Hoſts that judgeſt righteouſly, let me ſee thy vengeance upon them.* So Sr. *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 14. ſpeaking of *Alexander the Copperſmith doing him much harm*, adds, *the Lord reward him according to his works.* And *Revel.* 6. 10. 'Tis ſaid, *that the ſouls under the Altar do cry with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.* Beſides ſeveral imprecations in other places. Chap. 20. 12.

To this it may be anſwered: 1. That as a man may pity men under thoſe ſufferings which he may acknowledge to be juſt upon them, ſo he may rejoice at thoſe ſufferings as they are accompliſhments of Divine juſtice, though not as

they are revenge for his particular injuries. 2. To ſpeak unto God that he would vindicate us, is but to appeal unto the ſupreme Judge that he would do us right, *to commit our cauſe unto him that judgeth righteouſly*, as is ſaid of our *Saviour*, 1 *Pet.* ii. 23. Though this ſhould be in ſuch a manner as may tend to the conviction, reformation and forgiveneſs of the offending perſon, rather than to his ruin and condemnation; unleſs it be for ſuch extraordinary perſons as have a ſpirit of diſcerning, and are able to penetrate into the true ſtate of men as to their implacable incorrigible condition. Other perſons ſhould conſider *what ſpirit they are of*, as our *Saviour* tells the Diſciples *James* and *John*. Every man may not *call for fire from heaven* to deſtroy others, though *Elias* did and might.

The End of the Fourteenth Sermon.

The

The Fifteenth Sermon.

Rom. XII. 19.

Dearly beloved, Avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto wrath: For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord.

THere are theſe three things I would inſiſt upon in the *Application* of this Point.

1. To *examine* whether we are not guilty of this ſin?

2. To *convince* men of the deformity and miſchief of it.

3. To *quicken* and excite them unto a greater degree of watchfulneſs over themſelves, in reſpect of the temptations to this vice for the future.

1. To *examine* whether we our ſelves are not guilty of this ſin? There is no one thing wherein the corruption of nature

nature is more apt to exert it ſelf, than in offences of this kind, as relating to that firſt fundamental principle of nature, which is ſelf-preſervation; nor is it every ordinary degree of grace and virtue that will exempt a man from the power of this ſin. According to that meaſure which there is in any, either of impotence, pride, cowardiſe, cruelty, narrowneſs of mind, ſelfiſhneſs, in ſuch a proportion muſt that man be of a vindicative temper. And on the other ſide, he that is open and free in his way of converſe, apt to put the beſt conſtruction upon things, to take more notice of the virtues and kindneſſes of men than of their failings, not ſubject to jealouſies and evil ſurmiſings, but of a noble generous temper and carriage, lifted up above the common level of vulgar minds, in ſuch a degree will he be exempted from this ſin.

But now becauſe there is a vindicative anger and indignation againſt others, which is our duty, namely, that which is againſt offenders; and that every man is apt to palliate and excuſe his own

own revengeful temper and carriage by pretending this; therefore I shall briefly suggest these two Rules, whereby the truth of it may be discovered, whether it be a Virtue or Vice. To examine wherher,

1. Our anger be not more against the Persons than the Offences.

And, 2. whether it be not directed more against offences as they are injuries to us, than as they are violations of the Divine Law. In both which cases we fall under the guilt of this sin.

1. We are to examine whether our anger be not directed more against the persons of offenders than against their offences. If so, 'tis not the virtue but the sin of revenge. And this may be known by our readiness to exert any act of charity towards the offending person, in pitying and grieving for him, and applying the most effectual means fot his conviction and amendment. Our *Saviour* himself was angry at the sins of *Jerusalem*, and yet he wept over and bemoaned their destruction. So did *David* for his enemies, *Psal.* 35. 13, 14. *When they were sick*

ſick I put on ſackcloth, and humbled my ſoul with faſting: I behaved my ſelf as though he had been my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother.

On the other ſide, when we have no kind of compaſſion towards them, nor chartiy for them, but are continually reviling their perſons, aggravating their faults, adding to and increaſing their ſufferings, 'tis a ſure ſign this of a vindicative temper.

2. We are to examine whether our anger be not more directed againſt offences as they are injuries to us, than as they are violations of the Divine Law. Which will appear by that ſenſe which we have of ſuch tranſgreſſions, wherein we our ſelves are not particularly reflected upon, though God be thereby highly diſhonoured. If in ſuch caſes a man be calm and altogether unconcerned, if he have little or no diſpleaſure againſt perſons that are highly debauched and vicious, nay if he indulge himſelf in ſuch kind of vices, 'tis altogether in vain for ſuch a man in his puniſhing of offenders,

ders to pretend to zeal for the upholding of Law and Juſtice, and the glory of God. 'Tis a diſguiſe that which every one may ſee through. And though the puniſhment inflicted by ſuch may be righteous, and in it ſelf juſtly deſerved, yet as it comes from them under theſe qualifications, 'tis not ſo much juſtice as revenge.

2. In the next place we may hence be *convinced* of that deformity and miſchief which there is in this ſin. There are theſe ſix things that do uſually accompany it, either as *cauſes*, *effects*, or *properties* of it, *Folly*, *Pride*, *Impotence*, *Cowardiſe*, *Cruelty*, *Ingratitude*.

1. *Folly:* The meditating of revenge is ſtiled the *reſting* or cheriſhing *of anger in our boſoms*. And the *Wiſeman* tells us, that *anger reſteth in the boſom of fools*, *Eccleſ.* 7. 9. 'Tis the fool that rageth, *Prov.* 14. 16. The diſcretion of a man will teach him to defer his anger, *Prov.* 19. 11. And by the Rule of Contraries it muſt be his folly to precipitate and haſten to revenge.

Would

Would not that man be counted exceeding fond and imprudent, who if a horſe kick him, will think himſelf bound to recalcitrate or kick again, or to bite the dog by which he is bitten? You will ſay, thoſe creatures want reaſon, and do not underſtand the injury they do. *Eo loco ſit tibi quiſquis conſilio caret*, ſaith *Seneca. Why, ſo perhaps may thoſe fooliſh men, by whom you have been unwarily provoked.*

2. *Pride*: Every little injury will ſeem great, where men ſeem great to themſelves. 'Tis from the opinion and conceit which they have of their own worth, that they are apt to aggravate every treſpaſs as an high indignity. Fierceneſs doth ariſe from Pride. He that is puffed up with high imaginations of himſelf and of his own deſerts, *Jove dignas concipit iras. What? ſuch a man as he?* of ſo much worth to be ſo unworthily uſed by ſuch an one? and thus (as one well expreſſeth it) *as the boar whets and ſharpens his tuſks in his own foam, ſo doth a proud man excite and ſharpen his own indignation and revenge in the frothy imagination of his own worth.* This is the reaſon why our

Robinſon's Eſſays.

Savi-

Saviour doth join together *meekneſs* and *lowlineſs*, *ſelf-denial*, and *taking up the Croſs*.

3. *Impotence*, weakneſs, narrowneſs of ſoul, which is apt to make a man ſuſpicious, to ſtartle and be provoked at every ſhadow. *Quo infirmiores eo magis iracundi.* Perſons that are old, ſick, weak, are uſually upon this account moſt froward and vindicative. Whereas he that hath any true courage and greatneſs of mind will think it below him ſo much as to take notice of every little injury. *Non eſt magnus animus quem incurvat injuria.* 'Tis not every little blaſt that can ſhake him who is of a ſteady and noble courage. To be always fretting and aggravating of injuries, *formicarum & muſcarum eſt* (ſaith *Plutarch*) *belongs to ſuch little impotent creatures as Ants and Flies.* And to the ſame purpoſe *Seneca*, *Puſilli hominis eſt & miſeri repetere mordentem.* *'Tis the property of ſmall and mean wretches to be always retaliating.* *Mures & formicæ, ſi manum admoveris, ora convertunt. Imbecilia, ſe lædi putant ſi tanguntur.* The more impotent any thing is, the more ſuſpicious and vindicative

cative is it. There are many other sayings to this purpose amongst the *Heathen* Writers. I cannot omit that one more out of the *Satyrist*, *Juvenal. Sat.* 13.

——— *Quippe minuti*
Semper & infirmi est animi exiguique voluptas
Ultio, continuò sic collige, quod vindictâ
Nemo magis gaudet quam fœmina, &c.

I have the rather mentioned several of these *Sayings* out of the *Heathen* Writers in confirmation of what before I asserted, That revenge is a sin against the light of Nature, and that the rules of Philosophy are not in this kind so defective as some have suggested.

4. *Cruelty:* This naturally follows from the other. The less confidence any one hath in his own courage, the more rigorous and severe must he be in taking the advantages which he hath against another. *Ultio est æstus & fervor animi turbidi, & mentis efferatæ. Revenge is the æstuation of an enraged*

raged mind. 'Tis ſtiled *humana feritas.* It tranſports a man to ſavageneſs and ferity. Upon which account it is that Civil Wars are of all others the moſt cruel, becauſe they are commonly managed by the dregs of the people, ſuch kind of perſons as have no true generoſity, which renders them fierce and cruel.

5. *Cowardice:* This likewiſe is an uſual concommitant of the other. Nothing is more natural to men than to make themſelves the rule and meaſure whereby to judge of others. And therefore it cannot be but that ſuch perſons muſt be very obſequious and timerous towards all ſuch as are above them, out of an apprehenſion of what they themſelves would do upon the like advantage. Such perſons as are uſually moſt fierce in aſſerting a Cauſe when it hath prevailed, are uſually leaſt ſerviceable and courageous in vindicating of it when it is low. *Ultio eſt deſperationi proxima, etſi videri vult fortitudo: It puts on the diſguiſe of gallantry and courage, which cannot*

bear the leaſt ſhadow of diſhonour, but it proceeds from no better a ground than timerouſneſs and deſpair. All kind of Inſolence and Tyranny whatſoever being founded upon fear and cowardice.

6. *Ingratitude:* The very ſame unworthy temper and baſe principle, which makes revenge ſeem an eaſe, will make thanks ſeem a burden. That which aggravates injuries will diminſh kindneſſes. He who is ready to account every wrong intolerable, will be apt to eſteem every favour a due debt.

Add to all this, that 'tis a ſin which will indiſpoſe a man for the duties of piety, render our ſervices unacceptable, put us into an incapacity of having our ſins forgiven, or ſo much as expecting or praying for it.

Beſides that it will render a man feared and hated of all kind of perſons whatſoever, as being accompanied with a train of ſuch vile concommitants, as I have before mentioned. He who wrongs one, doth thereby threaten all whom he hath

power

power to hurt. And 'tis too true a saying, *Oderunt quem metuunt*, *Men hate those whom they fear.*

But amongst all others this vice is more especially hateful in four sorts of people (as a certain *Author* hath observed.) *Robinson's Essays.*

1. In *men of power and authority*; whose proper office it is in a legal regular way, to execute wrath upon evil-doers, and to vindicate others from injury. If they become guilty in this kind themselves, they commit murder with the sword of Justice; they transform themselves from Gods to Devils, and become *wickednesses in high places.*

2. In such persons *as have been obliged* by acts of kindness and friendship, which adds a peculiar aggravation to revengeful injurious dealing. *Had it been an enemy that had reproached me, then I could have born it; or if he that hated me, had lifted up himself against me, I would have hid my self from him: But it was thou, my friend, and my acquaintance, Psal.* 55. 12, 13.

3. *Profeſſors of Religion*; who are under the higheſt obligations and reſtraints from offending in this kind, *Gen.* 20. 11. when *Abraham* came to a place where *the fear of God was not*, there was no kind of injurious dealing but he thought he might expect from them; but to meet with this from ſuch as make profeſſion of Religion, muſt needs have in it this aggravation of a ſurprizal and diſappointment, as being ſo directly againſt the principles they pretend to.

4. Such as are *Poor*, *Prov.* 28. 3. *A poor man that oppreſſeth, is like a ſweeping rain which leaveth no food.* Such an one is moſt like to be violent and rapacious, becauſe of his neceſſities. And yet 'tis directly againſt his intereſt, as being moſt liable to ſuffer by ſuch dealing himſelf.

5. To which I may add a *fifth* ſort, *namely*, ſuch as have but lately received any ſignal deliverance or mercy themſelves, to whom their Lord hath freely remitted *ten thouſand Talents*, for them immediately after

after to be rigorous with *their fellow ſervants* in exacting *an hundred pence*, hath in it a great unworthineſs and incongruity. Such as have but lately experimented what a ſuffering condition is, and can tell with what inward vexation and regret of mind they were affected at the hard revengeful dealing of others towards them; for ſuch men to endeavour to bring others into the ſame ſtate, the evil whereof they have ſo lately taſted, hath in it a peculiar aggravation.

3. The *third* and laſt particular to be inſiſted upon, is to *quicken* and excite men unto a greater degree of watchfulneſs over themſelves in reſpect of the temptations to this vice for the future. I have urged ſeveral arguments to this purpoſe already. To which I ſhall add ſome few other Conſiderations by way of Motive.

1. To be ready to pardon and forget injuries is an argument of *generoſity and greatneſs of mind*, *Prov.* 16. 32. *He that is ſlow to anger, is better*

than the mighty; and he that ruleth his own ſpirit, than he that takes a City. 'Tis one of the properties whereby the *Philoſopher* doth deſcribe a magnanimous generous man *Ethic 4.* μεγαλόψυχος, ὁ μνησίκακος, ὁδὲ τιμορήτικος, that *he is not any deep reſenter of injuries, nor is he vindicative of them.* 'Tis from the ſame root that a Man is made benign and grateful to friends, which renders him gentle and exorable towards enemies. And though it be a noble generous thing to contend in benefits, not to be outdone in kindneſſes; yet not ſo in injuries. *Illic vinci turpe eſt, hic vincere.* That man hath the greateſt mind who can ſubdue his enemies by ſuffering and forgiving, and thoſe are the moſt ingenuous conqueſts which are made over the minds and affections of men by kindneſs. According to that old *Motto*, *Nobile vincendi genus patientia.* Nothing renders a man more venerable and amiable than this readineſs to forgive. As for ſuch Caſes wherein 'tis not ſafe to pardon, there the exacting of due puniſhment is not cruelty but

but just severity, and a political vertue: but when there is no such publick danger, when there may be any hopes of winning and obliging men by kindness, 'tis not then only less profitable, but likewise less glorious to pursue them with punishments. How do we reverence the memories, and rise up at the mention of the names of such persons as have in former ages been famous for their *Clemency* and Indulgence? *Camillus*, *Aristides*, *Socrates*, and *Cæsar*, of whom 'tis said, that he was *in Ulciscendo leniss-* Sueton.
mus, apt to forget nothing so much as injuries. And *Cicero*, no great lover or flatterer of him, tells him, *Nil habit nec fortuna tua majus, quam ut possis, nec natura tua melius, quam ut velis, conservare quamplurimos. That herein did consist the true greatness of his fortune, that he was able, and the goodness of his nature that he was willing to shew favour to his Adversaries.* And on the other side, with what horrour and aversation do we think of such as have been full of fierceness and immanity?

2. A *Second particular* I would ſuggeſt, is, That we would conſider what difference there is betwixt the advantages to be acquired by *Revenging* and *Pardoning* of Injuries.

By occaſioning ſome hurt and damage to an Adverſary, we may procure ſome ſatisfaction to our own private particular paſſions. But on the other ſide, his proſperity and vertue will redound to the publick advantage.

The pleaſure of revenge is but ſhort and momentany; that which ariſeth from the conſcience of honeſt and worthy actions, is laſting and permanent.

By revenge a man is but even with his enemy, but by pardoning he is ſuperior to him.

He that ſuffers injury, is but aſſaulted; but he that ſtudies revenge is overcome. *Be not overcome of evil.*

Men are very averſe from yielding to their Adverſaries; but he that hath a revengeful mind, doth that which is much worſe, *he gives place to the Devil, Epheſ.* 4. 27. who may be ſaid to ſubdue us when he doth by

by his inſtruments provoke us to this ſin.

By revenge we may perhaps endamage our adverſaries eſtate or body, but we do withal thereby hurt our own ſouls; whereas by pardoning and relieving him we do that which will be advantageous both to him and our ſelves.

'Tis made a queſtion amongſt ſome, Which is moſt eligible, *whether to have one frind more, or one enemy leſs?* Whether to add to our help, or ſubſtract from our oppoſition? But without all ſcruple it muſt needs be more deſirable, to effect both theſe, namely, both to get one friend more, and one enemy leſs. Which can only be done by ſubduing them with kindneſs.

3. Though this be a duty always ſeaſonable as to the habit, yet it is more particularly neceſſary as to our exerting the acts of it when we approach before God in any ſolemn duty.

The duty of *Prayer*, men muſt *lift up holy hands without wrath*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8.

Hearing

Hearing the word, receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word, Jam. 1. 21.

Particularly *the Lord's Supper*, which is therefore ſtiled a Communion, becauſe of that mutual love and agreement which it ſuppoſeth amongſt thoſe that partake of it. There was a ſtrict prohibition of *Leaven* in the celebrating of the *Paſſover*, and what was thereby ſignified the Apoſtle may inform us, where he ſpeaks of the *leaven of malice and revenge*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 8. *Mat.* 5. 23. *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembreſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee; leave there thy gift, and go, firſt be reconciled to him.* Though Sacrifices and Oblations were a duty of the firſt Table, and one of the principal parts of Religion; yet without this fraternal love and forbearance, it will not be acceptable. And 'tis in vain for men to pretend to acts of Piety, who are negligent in duties of Charity; and God will have this kind of *mercy rather than ſacrifice.* The *Apoſtle* tells us, that the giving of *alms is a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, Phil.* 4. 18.

4. 18. And yet in another place he tells us, that though a man ſhould *give all his goods to feed the poor*, yet *without this charity it would profit him nothing*. So neceſſary is this to the rendring of our perſons and ſervices acceptable. 1 Cor. 13.

For the better obſervance of our duty in this particular, be pleaſed to take notice of theſe few *Directions*.

1. Labour to ſee the hand of Providence in every evil that befals you; this will take us off from revengeful thoughts againſt the inſtruments of our ſufferings. This was that which made *Job* ſo patient, *Job* 1. 21. his aſcribing the loſſes he had by the *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans* to God's Providence. And ſo *David* when *Shimei* railed at him, pacified himſelf with this conſideration, *The Lord hath bid him*. 2 Sam 16. 11.

2. Labour to get a true ſenſe of your own ſins and great unworthineſs. Where ſins lye heavy, injuries will lye light. The more humble any man is, the leſs revengeful will he be.

3. Be

3. Be very cautious to prevent the rising, or however to suppress the growth of anger, *Let not the Sun go down upon it.* That which is but *anger* when we go to bed, may rise up *malice.*

4. Consider, that there are no kind of injurious persons but upon cool deliberate thoughts we may find sufficient reason not to revenge our selves upon. *Aut potentior, aut imbecillior, læsit: si imbecillior, parce illi; si potentior, tibi. If he be much your inferior, spare him out of charity and generosity; if more potent, spare your self out of wisdom.* Is he a professt enemy? he doth but according to his kind. Have we deserved it from him? he gives us but our due. Is he a good man? we should forgive him because God doth. Is he a wicked person? we may well forbear him, considering that dreadful vengeance he is is exposed to from God, both for that and all his other sins. Is he a friend? we should the rather submit to some injuries, because we have received former kindnesses from him.

Sen. de Ira.

It

It was a desperate speech that of *Cosmus* Duke of *Florence*, *Though we read that we are commanded to forgive our enemies; yet we no where read that we are commanded to forgive our friends.* Whereas this follows *à majori*, if enemies, much more friends; for that very reason whereby *Job* did humble and appease all impatient thoughts, *Shall we receive good from their hands, and shall we not receive evil?* So that I say, there is no kind of provocation we can meet with, but may afford some ground or occasion for our forgiving of it.

I could not think of any fitter subjects with which to take my leave of this place, than those that I have been lately insisting upon, concerning *Gentleness* and *Moderation*, mutual *forbearance* and *forgiveness* of one another; which are so universally seasonable for all times and places, of such general advantage both as to publick and private welfare, so peculiarly suited to the main drift and spirit of the Gospel. And I should esteem it for a very great happiness and success, if I might be any ways instrumental to emancipate the minds

of

of men from thoſe narrow and fierce principles whereby they are ſo eaſily apt to be provoked to keenneſs and ſeverity one againſt another, to the diſturbance of Society, and the taking men off from the quiet and comfort of their conditions.

The Scripture tells us, that 'tis this vertue which I have now been exhorting unto, that muſt render us *perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect*; that muſt raiſe us up unto the higheſt and neareſt reſemblance unto the Deity; that muſt promote our inward comfort, and our outward peace. And therefore I cannot more fitly ſhut up all, than with that Valediction of the *Apoſtle*'s with which he concludes his *Second* Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*,

2 Cor. 13. 11. *Finally, Brethren, farewell: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace ſhall be with you.*

FINIS.

OF the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion: Two Books. By the Right Reverend Father in God, Dr. *John Wilkins*, Lord Biſhop of *Cheſter*. To which is added, A Sermon Preach'd at his Funeral, by *William Lloyd*, D. D. Dean of *Bangor*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majeſty. The Fourth Edition.

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